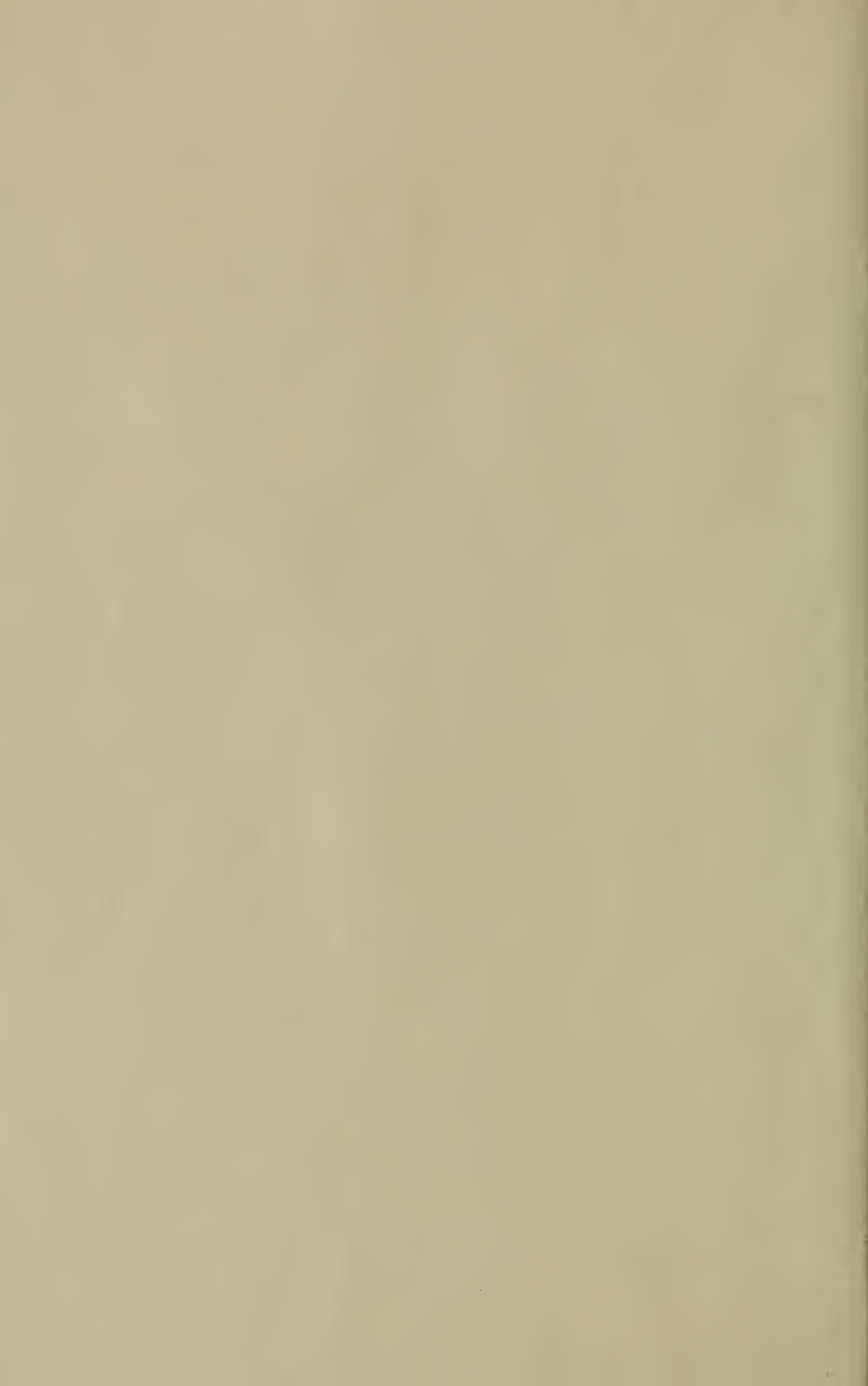


VOCAL FAULTS

AND THEIR REMEDIES



By W. H. BREARE



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I.

Vocalism : Its Structure and Culture from an English Standpoint

II.

Elocution : Its First Principles

III.

Vocal Faults and Their Remedies

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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1907

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AND

THEIR REMEDIES

BY
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VOCAL EXPERT AND ADVISER

Author of
"Vocalism : its Structure and Culture from an English Standpoint"
"Elocution : its First Principles. (For Singers and Speakers.)"

WITH PREFACE BY
F. GILBERT WEBB
(Lancelot)
"The Referee," London.

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PREFACE

IF music be the youngest of the arts, then vocalism, as at present understood, is her daughter. It is true that the old Italian singing masters threshed out from the ears of experience certain rules by which they trained many voices with excellent results; but vocalism based upon the understanding and application of physiological and mental laws, and data of scientific character, is the outcome of quite modern times. In searching after the action of these laws many mistakes have been made. It must ever be that the pioneer in cutting through the tangled and dark forest of ignorance in quest of light must sometimes go in wrong directions; but the mistakes of those who lead the way are valuable warnings to the observant who follow; and so Art progresses slowly but surely to the goal where all things become clear and understood.

Of all branches of music that of vocalisation is the most subtle and complex to teach and to learn; for it means not only the perfect union of speech and tone, but the power to produce

tone that shall express that which speech omits; to have in your throat an instrument on which you can play with complete confidence, and that is so responsive to thought that every passing phase of emotion finds its true reflection in gradations of tone-colour more variable and fleeting than cloud shadows on a summer sea. It is because singers do not realise how wonderful and beautiful is their art that the majority achieve so little. Did they think more they would accomplish more; for the essence of singing is thought, and that is why it is so difficult to learn and to teach.

It is sometimes said that we have lost the art of *bel canto*, perfect singing, but this is not so. In the olden days, the word was the abject slave to the musical scheme of the composer, and singers loved to astonish their listeners by vocal agility; but the slave has been enfranchised and the word is now the master, and Saint Cecilia has to obey where formerly she ruled supreme. We are no longer satisfied with mere beauty of vocal tone and ornamental devices: we demand appropriateness of tone-colour and dramatic consistency, and, above all, perfect speech in song. It is a different, and really a higher phase of the old *bel canto*; for it is more intellectual, exacts wider knowledge, and is more sincere. It re-

quires more thought than the cult of the Rossinian School, and much deeper study. The successful artist to-day must be able to personate the philosopher as well as the lover.

There is no denying that hundreds of voices have been ruined by bad teaching. There is faulty training in every branch of education, but the results are rarely so tragic as in singing. The vocal apparatus is so delicate that it can be irretrievably injured by straining and bad habits. The efforts of every man, therefore, who strives to dismiss dangerous fallacies and make public the results of recent and original research should be welcomed, and it is because I believe this book will be to many as a light in darkness that I write this Preface. I should add, perhaps, that my belief is based upon my having had for over twenty years to investigate the various methods of vocal production, not as a teacher but as a critic, and, consequently, have had countless opportunities of watching the effects of the methods on public singers. I have been as a man on a hill who watches the strife, and sees the results of the struggles of the warriors in the vale of achievement.

I hold no brief for this book. The Author was unknown to me until a few weeks ago, when he sought me out because of my criti-

cisms of his previous treatises on *Vocalism* and *Elocution*, and asked me to write a Preface to this, his concluding volume—a somewhat rare request for an author to make of his reviewer. The proofs having been submitted, I consented, because I found therein so much that makes for enlightenment and that is conducive to cause the student to think. One prominent merit of the book is its frankness. The Author manifestly tells all he knows; there are no cryptic sentences and dark hints of “vocal secrets.” It contains the most exhaustive analyses of vocal sounds or phonetics I know. It is the most complete guide to singing in English yet published. It insists upon the union of mind and tone.

F. GILBERT WEBB.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

WILLIAM HAMMOND BREARE, the author of this work, was born in Marblehead, Mass., U. S., and made his debut as a boy soprano before the age of five. He inherited from his father (Thomas Breare, once a Yorkshire choir boy) aptitude and versatility in music. The latter, who trained several choruses for the first and second Peace Jubilees in Boston, Mass., though an amateur, was able to play almost any instrument, and as a singer read at sight any cadenza, vocal or instrumental, placed before him. The author of this work over 40 years ago joined the choir of the Church of the Advent, Boston, U. S., as soloist, and was long associated with Henry Carter, the organist, one of the four Carter Brothers, English musicians, formerly resident in England, Canada, and the United States. Wm. Carter, conductor of the Carter's Choir, Albert Hall, London, was one of these brothers. Our author, as a boy singer, sang as soloist in many choirs and festivals in the Eastern States, and often co-operated with Dr. Henry Cutler, at one time organist of Trinity Church,

New York City. His voice broke whilst rehearsing in one of the New York churches, and he then devoted himself to the study of composition and other branches of the art. He studied in Leeds, England, with the late F. W. Hird, and eventually an attachment to the only daughter of a well-known English journalist (the late Robert Ackrill) led him into journalism. He did not altogether relinquish his music, however, but in an honorary capacity continued to conduct opera and oratorio societies. He wrote much as a critic, and still edits the *Harrogate Herald*. He has long been recognised as one of the closest and most instructive of English critics, particularly in respect to vocalism. The series of works which bear his name have been promptly accepted as "the most complete guide to singing in English yet published," and his services as a vocal adviser are in much request by intelligent students and successful professionals. As an analyst of tone qualities and arbiter of style, the author has acquired remarkable powers in voice building and cultivation of temperament.

DAN GODFREY.

January 5th, 1907.

INTRODUCTION.

IN this volume I have endeavoured to set forth some of the major difficulties through which various students have, from time to time, had to work their way in quest of vocal efficiency. How disheartening are these earlier experiences every accomplished master or singer knows. The troubles are rendered all the more acute by reason of the fact that no vocalist can really hear the true sound of his or her voice. One may FEEL certain effects or impressions, in the head, appreciable for limited guidance, but cannot HEAR the true sounds. Hidden dangers are most difficult to avoid. If we do not know what threatens us, how are we to guard against undesirable influences? In vocalism, as in other arts, one must understand causes and effects. Many of these I have endeavoured to explain, taking nothing for granted which I have not proved to my own and others' satisfaction during a long and laborious study of voice building. Notwithstanding the exceptions to every rule (for no two voices or individuals precisely alike exist), the enclosed deductions, when

properly understood and applied, I trust may bring the same happy relief to the student labouring under vocal ailments as came to me when, after infinite trouble, I had worked out these conclusions.

In pursuing the study of "cause and effect," as applicable to the subject of "Vocal Faults and their Remedies," I deal with my plan of teaching ("tone colours" and other subjects) with the object of inducing vocalists to think and to analyse. At the same time I have endeavoured to explain the operations of technical parts of the vocal machinery by which singers are able to acquire wide ranges of emotional tone variety and expressive technique. The matters dealt with in this book are all dependent upon one another, as forming indispensable elements of a concrete whole.

W. H. BREARE.

Herald Office,
Harrowgate, Yorkshire,
England.

September, 1906.

OUTLINE OF THE SERIES

IN *Vocalism: Its Structure and Culture, from an English Standpoint*, I have attempted but briefly to consider general principles of natural voice production as they apply to the English language; also, the wider range of subjects bearing upon the essential equipment of a vocalist. In *Elocution: Its First Principles*, I have sought to analyse the mechanics of the speaking voice, explain their nature and operations in such a manner as might prove helpful alike to speakers and singers. The necessity for the latter to understand principles of elocution is more widely recognised to-day than ever. In the present volume, *Vocal Faults, and their Remedies*, I deal, under the head of "Cases," with the more important difficulties that have come under my notice and describe what I have found to be their respective cures. I have included, also, chapters on tone-colours, analytical methods of teaching, placing the voice, mouth positions, tables of vocal positions and vowel shades, awkward words to sing, and interspersed all the hints I could

recall likely to prove useful to advanced students and teachers. I trust the three volumes will be found sufficiently exhaustive to form a helpful series of text-books fairly covering the ground of vocal cultivation. The propositions advanced represent deductions forced upon me by my own experience, extending over nearly half a century, and include nothing derived from hitherto published works. I have tried to give in the most helpful forms only the results of my own work and experience. The subject is not exhausted, and I may feel impelled to return to some other phase on a future occasion. For the present, however, the task I have set myself is done.

VOCAL FAULTS AND THEIR
REMEDIES

PLACING THE VOICE

HITHERTO I have not thought it necessary to offer remarks upon the subject of "placing the voice," for the reason that perfect pronunciation and enunciation effect this, automatically, inducing at the same time proper flow and direction of the breath. Students often experience difficulty in arriving at perfect pronunciation through uncertainty regarding mouth and lip positions. As it may assist some of these to a better understanding, I will endeavour to explain what I mean by "placing the voice," and at the same time comment upon misconceptions which have arisen in pursuit of this theory. But first let me repeat that the accurate mouth positions of perfect pronunciation (and the natural flow of breath and tongue operations induced thereby) are calculated to effect all the placement necessary.

In singing the English language one has to employ many different mouth and lip positions in order to realise in turn our innumerable vowel, diphthong, and consonant sensations. Each demands distinct mouth, lip, or tongue

arrangement. To accurately produce them, the attack of the breath must be concentrated or delivered at different points of the mouth. It is not that the tone is actually produced at these points, but to the singer it seems as if it were. The position of the mouth merely alters or determines the character of the tone which comes from the vibration of the so-called vocal chords. It is well, however, for the pupil to think he is producing the tone at these points; hence we sometimes say, "Produce the tone in the centre of the mouth," or "More forward," "On the teeth," etc. The pupil knows what we mean, does it, and matters are expedited. It is this concentration of the vocalised breath at the respective points necessary for the desired pronunciation which affords the firmly-rounded note, clear attack, and uniform quality indispensable to finished singing. The finest of voices becomes disagreeable if on a given sustained vowel the lips alter their shape, because by so doing the direction of breath attack is changed, the tongue moved from the position which gives the best tone, and unpleasant conflict, or confusion, of vocal qualities results;—thus we have scattered tone.

As an illustration of this interference with that indispensable solidarity of tone which

makes for agreeable effect, I will instance ensemble singing. We group our singers as closely as possible in order to achieve a compact body of tone. If one part sing louder than the others the voices do not blend. This disturbs the proportions of the ensemble and creates distractions unpleasant to the sensitive musical ear. Changes of mouth position in the soloist, whilst on sustained vowels, have similar effects upon vocal quality.

Many teachers are so enamoured of the voice-placing theory that they endeavour to produce every note—regardless of each vowel sound's special position—at the same point. The “ah” being the most favourable for free and open tone, they attempt that position on all occasions. Thus “e’s,” “a’s,” and other vowels are so distorted into the “ah” sound by the “ah” position that perfect pronunciation not only becomes impossible, but we have a tense, artificial voice. The results we hear to-day on every hand.

I will now endeavour to mention the points at which the tone column should be directed to realise true vowel sounds. First let me draw the student's attention to the hollow in the roof of the mouth. When the breath (consequently the tone) can be concentrated in this cup the quality is most full, rounded, and

resonant. It is not every vowel, however, which can be located thus. The position is favourable for the vowels "ah," "awe," "u" in "but," "o" in "off," "i" if treated as a combination of "ah" and "e," and other similar vowels. The "awe" is produced a little further forward in the cup or hollow by condensing the mouth at the corners. The short sound of "a" (as in "hat") comes further forward in the mouth than "ah," and with more closed lips. The long "a" (in "may") is further forward and more closed still; whilst the short "e" ("met") is even further forward, and long "e" ("eat") quite to the front, on the teeth, with less opening of the mouth than any other vowel.

To direct the breath and confine the tone to the hollow in the roof of the mouth, one must exercise a species of light check by means of the cheeks, whilst the flow of tone is steadily directed to the cup. No effort is required. One has but to call into action the power of contraction or suction which this cup can readily exert. Hold the tone there by this means, just as one would retain water, or a sweet in the roof of the mouth; but take care to preserve a steady flow of wind. The student by experiment will soon ascertain how all this is accomplished, find he holds the tone in a

vice, and derive exhilarating delight from the effortless accomplishment of the feat.

In singing vowels which demand other positions than those I have just dealt with ("ah"), the student should concentrate his mind on fixing, holding, and thus producing his tone at the respective points the pronunciation demands. Great assistance may be derived in dealing with the more acute and forward vowels (which require, at the onset, more closed mouth positions) if the singer, having immediately realised the position for such a vowel as long "a," endeavour to direct the breath as near the cup point as possible (simply open the mouth a little). By adopting this plan it will be found that having once located the production of the long "e," or "a," the mouth can be gradually opened so as to direct the current of breath more into the cup without unduly disguising the real sound of the acute vowel.

This is a great advantage, because it renders the tone more resonant and easy to sustain, whilst the quality of the note is materially improved.

Vocalists often have difficulty in singing acute vowels on a high note. Let them take the "ah" or short "a" position, and at the same time approximate to the "ah" or short

“a” sound in attacking the note; whereupon, having located the tone in the cup, the more acute sound of the vowel desired can be given as a final with closing lips. The result of this plan is a good resonant quality to begin with, and the final impression, bearing the acute vowel sound, will give the effect of good pronunciation. There are many little expedients of this kind which can be accomplished with success, and it is herein the teacher should prove himself resourceful, even inventive. But as all mouths differ, various pupils must be treated in accordance with their individual peculiarities.

I have found it possible to commence the attack of an acute vowel with the more open position, and eventually realise by way of a final the true sound of the vowel required.

On the other hand, I have been able to commence with the true sound of a closed vowel, and gradually open the mouth without interfering sensibly with the true pronunciation.

The check breath gives good tone and clean attack. One cannot realise the check breath without a certain contraction or suction of the mouth which confines the tone, whatever the vowel, nearer the hollow. A steady, even flow of breath induces good tone. In attempting to

hold a note in the hollow of the roof of the mouth the breath is directed to this point in a firm, even forceful flow. It is this support or concentration of breath which gives the superior tone. We know that loose, faltering wind robs the note of its close texture, introduces disagreeable elements, and the voice becomes scattered, therefore unconvincing.

There is a wide difference between the suction control in connection with the cup I have mentioned and the tension of the jaw, throat, and muscles of the face. The latter results in what I can only term "chewed" or "mouthed" tones which become muffled. Many singers fall into this habit, and, as they cannot hear the true effects of their own voices, imagine they are producing fine tone qualities. From such methods they derive certain sensations in their heads which prompt them to believe that the tone is resonant and effective. But it is not so. By this undue compression of jaw, cheek, and throat, the flow of breath is impeded, and the resonant chamber choked. Tones produced in this way do not carry. They block, much in the same way as the strings of an imperfect piano thud through faulty action.

CASES

IMPERFECT BREATH MANAGEMENT.— “PUMPING”

THIS vocalist (a contralto) sang spasmodically, exhausting her store of breath on nearly every note by a swift crescendo push. The effects were: Breathy tone of little resonance, strenuous effort, scattered and unsteady quality.

THE REMEDIES: Immovable lips in the proper position for each vowel sound and consonant impression. A soft flow of legato breath (held in check), with gradually increasing wind pressure where the tone is unsteady. One note made to flow into another without extravagant slurring. The consonants enunciated gently, the mouth opened quickly to the requisite vowel positions. No tone to issue from slowly moving mouth from consonant to vowel positions. The tone generally soft and even in the first instances, almost as in humming.

BAD HIGH NOTES

IN this case the singer, a good bass, went to pieces on some extremely high notes. This generally happened when the word or syllable ended with a consonant. His mouth position changed on the word, and he interrupted the flow of breath and lost control of the voice. He did not maintain the vowel sound throughout the note with a fixed mouth position, but half way through the tone introduced and sustained the final consonant. This caused change of mouth position and loss of control.

THE REMEDY: Stick to the vowel position and sound throughout the note, supporting it by slightly increasing breath pressure. Cut off the tone at the end quickly with the brief final consonant.

VOICE CRACKING

THIS arose through the fault described under "Bad High Notes," and was corrected by the remedy mentioned therein.

In another case the voice cracked through employing too wide and open lips. The aperture was too large to be completely filled with a steady flow of wind. Vocal control, therefore, was lost.

THE REMEDY: Condense the openness of the lips, particularly at the mouth corners. Send an increasing flow of breath through, which must be confined to a consolidated current by steady breath and firm, immovable lips. The vocalist will then feel he holds the tone by the lips, and that the breath power helps to focus the delivery.

By this plan one economises breath and improves the tone. Longer runs may thus easily be sung.

UNEVEN QUALITY

A SINGER presented a scale showing great disparity of power and quality between successive notes. Several would prove pure and resonant. Then would come a tone so weak or thin as to occasion a shock to the sensitive ear. These undesirable contrasts arose from the following causes:—

1.—The good note was from an oval, sometimes a diamond-shaped mouth. The next would occur on a vowel demanding a nearly-closed position of the lips, when the power would come less spontaneously. Upon the open tone the breath was insufficiently regulated, and the note became too prominent for the weaker which followed. Hence the disparity.

REMEDY: Regulate by flow of breath the note on an open position (if not accented) more proportionately to the weaker which is to follow.

TOO OPEN TONE.

2.—A good tone, arising from a favourable mouth position, was often followed by another

quite vapid in character, though produced on the same open vowel. The mouth had assumed too open and wide a shape for the breath to consolidate the tone in compact form. It is often difficult for a student to resist the temptation to go, as he thinks, one better, viz., opening the mouth wider.

REMEDY: Keep a fixed position when the vowels permit. Never stretch the mouth beyond an opening the breath can adequately fill with sustaining effect.

CAT TONES

One can hardly open the mouth too much perpendicularly, but may easily overdo the stretched lip position horizontally. Notice a cat's mouth when it mews. If a singer (particularly a soprano) adopt the cat's position on a vowel sound, she must expect to produce a cat's tone.

EXTRAVAGANT BREATH

3.—I have known unequal qualities to appear when a singer has employed too much breath on unaccented notes.

SCATTERED ATTACK

AN exaggerated attack on accented notes often results in scattered sound, even when the mouth position is fairly appropriate.

THE CAUSE: The percussion of the strong attack is not immediately supported by swiftly flowing breath, the lips are moved by the impact of the breath, the note slips and assumes a scattered form productive of various conflicting qualities. A rounder, or more condensed mouth, drawn at the corners, is most appropriate for forcibly attacking high notes, though much depends upon the facial characteristics of the singer.

VOICE JARRING

ONE singer's voice became unsteady, often jarred in moving from note to note. This vocalist, after attempting to hold the vowel sound with moving lips, would endeavour to pass to the next vowel without properly enunciating the consonants. He attempted the impossible; that is, to deliver an "n" or "r" with open instead of partially-closed lips. He could not do so, therefore lost lip control of his note, which, in turn, interrupted the natural flow and direction of his breath.

RESULT: Disagreeable qualities.

VAPID TONE

A SINGER'S voice is often liable to attenuate if the mouth is opened too widely. Tone may be steadied by reducing the circle of the lips. But real security of voice in singing words can only be assured by the accurate and prompt realisation of the lip positions which come from true pronunciation and enunciation.

2

EVOLUTION OF TONE

VOCALISTS should understand that, whatever the word, the true lip and mouth positions, if properly observed, will run into or flow out of each other in natural evolutionary form. In so doing they attract and consume the right quantity of breath without any thought or scheming of breath management on the part of the singer. By this automatic adjustment the note consumes the breath and the quality becomes pure. The effect upon an audience is comforting, because not a trace of effort can be detected.

CLUMSY TONE PROGRESSION

THIS is a very common fault, arising from various causes.

In one case it arose from interrupted and unsteady breath currents. The singer's voice quavered, bumped from note to note, and passed beyond control. Further results were disagreeable changes of tone and absence of legato flow.

REMEDY: Steady, continuous breath current; instantaneous adoption of the respective mouth positions, and prompt, clean treatment of consonants.

IMPERFECT RHYTHM

ANOTHER instance arose from not realising the true rhythm or swing of a phrase. This may be accomplished without stopping the flow of the breath current if the proper accents are observed by increasing the breath pressure on the accented notes. If wrong notes are emphasised it not only disturbs the rhythmic flow, but throws the breath so out of gear as to introduce unpleasant tone qualities as well as faulty tone progression.

REMEDY: Observe the accented notes boldly, if necessary by swift crescendo breath pressure; otherwise just "feel" the note by the slightest increase of wind power, staccato emphasis, or pause. In moving from note to note, avoid any hesitancy respecting lip and mouth positions. If no perceptible emphasis is required on a succession of notes, still feel in your mind which notes, under ordinary circumstances, are most essential to the rhythm. Then the vocal flow or swing of the phrase will come naturally when accents are to be resumed.

TREATMENT OF UNACCENTED NOTES

I HAVE occasionally had difficulty with students in treating triple time. My attention was directed to this point by the clumsy way a singer executed three successive short notes of given length which occurred in the melody proper. The tone, rhythm, and progression were bad, the breath demoralised.

REMEDY: The pupil, by my direction, "felt," or emphasised slightly, the first note by gentle pressure of the legato breath, sang the second softer (without disturbing the continuity of wind), increased very slightly the breath flow on the third note, and the breath current thus attained the proper flow necessary for the fuller attack of the next note, which, being the first of the bar, demanded accentuation. By this method there was no stoppage of, or interference with, the flowing breath, and the phrase evolved naturally, with the true rhythmic pulse, whilst the tone remained pure and unconstrained. Tone faults, it will thus be realised, often arise from faulty vocal movement, whilst imperfect progression frequently emanates from wrongly

22 Treatment of Unaccented Notes

produced tones. Probing still deeper, we shall find that the fundamental causes are either wrong facial positions or imperfect breath management—possibly both.

COMPRESSED MOUTHS

ABNORMALLY small or large mouths often create difficulties for singers. The former, however, as a rule, entail the graver vocal troubles. If the lips be finely cut, very small, and what are termed "pretty," one generally discovers scant elasticity of lip for the acquisition of varied tone effects. I term such "compressed mouths," because of their tendency to close on sustained, open vowel sounds. The tension which causes this is due to the smallness of the lips, which, when stretched or opened beyond their usual limit, act like an elastic band. Thus the mouth gradually closes when the aperture should remain at its fullest.

A REMEDY: To counteract this, it may be necessary to disregard the rule as to a fixed mouth on a sustained vowel. It can be done if a singer realise that the lips may gradually open in certain cases, without ill effects, if the pressure of the wind BE NOT INCREASED AT THE SAME TIME. The difficulty of a compressed mouth may be overcome by gradually opening

the lips to a slight extent, in order to counteract the closing tendency.

Seldom open the mouth and increase the tone simultaneously on a sustained vowel sound, unless some exceptional colour effect, such as in the word "brown," is demanded.

FLUCTUATING QUALITIES

SOMETIMES when a singer has been producing a sustained note, despite the infallibility of mouth position, the quality of the tone has deteriorated in an unaccountable manner. Every teacher endowed with a sensitive ear must have met with this experience. It is one of the most disappointing occurrences when, by perfect pronunciation and accurate mouth position, we have obtained from the pupil the very quality we want, to encounter the next second strange fluctuations not at all satisfactory. The poorer qualities in such cases I have often been able to attribute to wrong breath currents.

REMDIES: If the tone is disappointing by reason of its lack of compactness, or body, then the breath pressure is not sufficiently firm and regular. If the note is harsh, reedy, or what I term sandy, or splintery, too much breath, or an unduly square mouth position is employed. When the right quality occurs, ask the pupil to notice just what breath pressure and mouth position he is using, and remind him to sustain precisely that flow if he would

preserve his best quality. When the proper pressure is steadily maintained, the notes come forth so smoothly and perfectly they sound as though oiled. The jarring friction, occasioned by too much breath (or shallow mouth position), always reminds me of a cart-wheel which needs lubrication. The slightest alteration of breath pressure—when the best quality has been secured—will often introduce elements so disturbing as to ruin the tone.

Lapses of correct facial expression, pronunciation or enunciation, have equally demoralising influences upon tone quality.

LIFELESS TONE

A MEZZO-SOPRANO produced a fluty tone, but it was small and somewhat muffled. The production sounded constrained and the voice lacked carrying power. I found this singer, who had a tiny, inflexible mouth, barely opened her lips. The quality revealed no harmonic or ringing brilliancy; therefore the tone, though somewhat warm and padded, possessed little vitality. Whatever the vowel might be, the lips assumed the same shape. The breath current, too, was irregular in pressure.

REMEDY: More extended lips and larger, perpendicular, opening of the mouth. Better pronunciation of vowels and enunciation of consonants. To add roundness and brilliancy, I employed the check-breath attack (see *Vocalism*, page 36) on accented vowels. The latter contributed the metallic influences which consolidated and brightened the voice.

FALTERING BREATH PRESSURE

A BRIGHT yet sympathetic soprano voice became thin, reedy, and attenuated on holding notes.

THE CAUSE: Gradual relaxation of breath pressure and a twitching mouth, which disturbed the vowel sounds and introduced varying qualities destructive to rounded, concrete tone.

REMEDY: A gently increasing rather than fluctuating, or diminishing breath current, and absolutely fixed mouth on the vowel sounds. Singers desirous of sustaining at even power should steadily increase the wind pressure, without too apparent augmentation of tone force. By this means we avoid skeleton notes and acquire tone-vitality without noise.

“SPLINTERY” TONE

ONE occasionally meets deep and powerful bass voices of a harsh, vibrant quality, reminding one of the reedy moan of a splinter, under a door, agitated by a strong wind. One such voice, which came to my notice, was of good material. The tone was huge, the wind capacity enormous, but the voice could attain no agreeable roundness owing to its excessive vibration. The possessor of this organ had a large, wide mouth, and his lips invariably formed a long, narrow slit, which, under teeth influence and strong wind currents, occasioned the circular-saw-tone I have suggested. It was a grating voice.

REMEDIES: I advised rounder and more contracted positions of the lips, much less breath current, and impressed upon the singer the necessity of not singing, but of humming, when attacking a bad note. With this mouth position and just sufficient easy flow of breath to fill the aperture, a purer quality of tone issued.

I found, too, that employment of the lighter check-breath attack frequently concentrated

the tone and induced just sufficient wind power to avoid that extravagance of breath which becomes audible. In this way the tone assumed more of that mellow character which precludes objectionable reediness. By attacking the note softly with the rounded mouth, and execution of a mild crescendo, the voice became so concentrated, or placed, and the wind-flow so graduated that, even under greater power, reediness did not occur. Instead of a sepulchral breathy tone, rich velvet quality, with just the slightest ring of metal, ensued. The latter element, at times so difficult to realise in “thick” or “sandy” voices, may generally be obtained if the pronunciation of the vowel is made more and more acute the longer it is held. This results in the most satisfactory tone concentration, which, after all, is the great purifier. Scattered notes are disturbing—concrete sounds comforting. The latter assert easeful resource as well as superior quality.

FOGHORN QUALITIES

A CONTRALTO could not preserve such mouth positions on rounded vowels as the pronunciation required, through moving lips and scattered breath (unvocalised), which emptied the lungs on almost every note. The tone approached that of the foghorn.

REMEDY: Steadier flow of breath (slightly extended mouth) through pleasant, half-smiling lips, added compactness and tinges of brilliancy, which obviated the objectionable breathy half-tone.

DETERIORATION OF BREATH CURRENTS

SIMPLE as it may seem, singers find much difficulty in preserving even power and flow of note. They do not remember the constant waste which is going on in all things. As the store of breath in the lungs diminishes, the flow becomes weaker, or hesitating. In order to provide against this waste, the breath pressure should be made firmer and firmer. This need not appear to affect the power of the tone, but will make the quality rounder, fuller, and more secure.

I had a case the other day wherein a singer in attempting to maintain an even flow of breath did not provide for this waste, the consequence being, every note became so tapered as to render uniform power, flow, and quality impossible. The wind escaped, unvocalised, as from punctured bellows.

REMEDY: In singing a phrase let the student commence with moderate force, and as each note occurs increase the breath pressure to the end of the note or passage. The singer should not appear to execute a cres-

cendo, but if the breath flow with greater and greater concentration of easy pressure on each succeeding note, the desirable uniform power, concentration, and flow, which are the secret of *il bel canto*, will speedily be realised. The vocalist in question, who had experienced great difficulty in sustaining absolutely even power, surmounted the trouble at once when each succeeding note was made the respective point at which he increased the pressure of his breath current. No great exertion is required in pursuing this method. The tone does not appear to actually increase, it merely rounds itself, gathering vitality, richness, and ease of progression comforting alike to singer and audience.

A CRAMPED MOUTH

THIS student had a small mouth, inflexible lips, and cramped delivery. The tone, whilst not lacking resonance, contained unsatisfactory elements. With the word "love" the pupil had much difficulty.

THE REMEDY: Hard pressure of the tongue on the gums over the upper teeth for "l," and swift attack with the mouth open on "ah" position, pronouncing and holding "ah." The mouth instantly but gradually closing on "v" realised the short "u" element (as in "but"), and this observance of the details of the word resulted in perfect pronunciation and pure, rounded tone, with the least possible expenditure of breath.

Careful analysis will show that the "ah" sound is the foundation of many open vowels. It affords the most favourable mouth position for good tone concentration. It is often necessary for that clean, round attack which gives not only substance to the voice, but quality and sustaining power. Let the student sing "love" as I have directed, attain the proper relative proportions of each element of the

word necessary to secure exact pronunciation, and he will be able to realise how important is the "ah" position of the mouth on words that do not actually contain the letter "a." But these elements must be accurately proportioned. When they are, they will so blend as not to render the process apparent to the listener, yet must achieve pronunciation in its most complete, resonant forms.

BREATHY ATTACK

A VOCALIST was in the habit of squandering breath on a single note of attack. The wind became so distinguishable as to destroy the tone. The effect was asthmatical.

REMEDY: Fixed, accurate mouth position for the requisite pronunciation of the vowel. Commence the note very softly—a mere breath; then increase the power by a swift crescendo until that roundness of note is acquired which gives the best timbre. Sustain at that power. By this method it will be found that very little is required to obtain excellent quality. The voice thus gathers metallic influences which add not only vital fulness, but brilliancy.

SAGGING TONES

I HAVE encountered cases wherein the tone has not only appeared wanting in resonance, but so inanimate as to seem hesitating, drowsy, even dead. Such voices, whilst not actually flat in pitch, would droop and sound depressed—"sag," I generally term it. This arises from insufficient contraction of the vocal ligaments through hesitant attack, unequal pressure or concentration of the breath current.

The cure for such vocal depression may be acquired by singing the emphasised notes of each bar with either the check-breath, explosive, or swift-crescendo attack. Generally, where the quality of a note becomes indifferent slight increase of breath pressure will not only prevent the voice from "sagging," but materially improve the tone quality and vocal progression—providing the mouth positions are correct. Such breath pulsations may be made to enrich or metallise (according to mouth position) a voice to such an extent as to vocalise breath that will otherwise run to waste, become either unpleasantly audible or

lifeless. "Sagging" produces the droning sensation of the singer who is sometimes said to have "no music in his voice."

TOO CLOSED, OR VEILED TONES

THESE are produced under obvious restraint, too far back in the mouth—generally in the throat, which is painfully compressed. The quality is woolly and the voice smothered. Because the effect upon the singer is soft he imagines his tone is mellow. It is not so. The timbre is lifeless and does not carry.

THE CURE for this is a more open and extended mouth, a pleasant expression of the face, looser lips, and that flexible attack and pressure of breath which causes the tone to ring.

SHOUTING HIGH NOTES

MANY singers are apt to produce a tone, particularly on high notes, which gives the impression of shouting. German and Italian opera tenors of the present day are often guilty of this vocal offence. The tone thus produced, though loud, lacks the true ring and quality of a rounded, concentrated note. The texture is loose and flabby, therefore as vapid as a sickly smile.

THE CAUSES: A too-open mouth, particularly at the corners, and a shouting, uncontrolled delivery.

THE CURE: A contraction of the under lip or mouth corners, by which the resonant chamber or open mouth becomes smaller at the base. If the mouth is opened so that the roof is not too much masked by the upper lips, then the tone will be powerful, more rounded, resonant, metallic, and easily controlled than the shouting tone.

FRAYED TONE

WE often hear a note which in the language of colour is blanched ; in texture frayed. There seems to be no adhesion of its elements. The outer edges are limp and uneven ; there is no vitality or ring because of its want of that concentration which produces cohesion.

THE CAUSES: Relaxation of mouth position or faltering breath induced by irresolute facial position on account of uncertainty as to the proper mood. Hesitating attack may also be partly responsible.

THE CURE: Do not let any of these contingencies I have described occur. Uncertainty in even one particular will interrupt the natural breath current, and then anything may happen.

UNCERTAIN PRODUCTION

IMPERFECT pronunciation is the root of many tone faults. If the main vowel element of a word is not secured at the first attack of a note, the most favourable mouth position is not acquired. The lips then move aimlessly in search of the correct facial opening and, not finding it promptly, the current of wind is disturbed, affecting the vocal quality. At the same time, the lips immediately become tense, the vocal organs cramped in physical effort to restore the equilibrium of the voice, and the result is chaotic. The sovereign remedy for much uncertain production, therefore, is ACCURATE VOWEL PRONUNCIATION.

Even when the pronunciation and facial positions are true, any undue hardness of the lips will render the muscular tissues of the face, tongue, and throat so tense as to affect purity of tone and natural delivery.

Clenched fists, wrinkled brows, tension of the body or limbs, will weaken vocal control to an extent which must depreciate the tone qualities.

THICK TONES

ONE often meets with thick or ponderous voices devoid of metallic brilliancy. They may prove either "woolly," "sandy," or "reedy." If the quality may not be purified by the increased breath pressure of the swift crescendo, then the check-breath attack will, in all probability, give that concentration of tone which almost invariably adds the metallic brilliancy which vitalises dead or unnatural qualities. Here again the pronunciation must be so perfect as to ensure satisfactory evolution of the true mouth positions.

THE VIBRATO

A TENOR who consulted me was so badly affected with the "vibrato" (which I term the "wobble") he could not sustain or sing in tune. He had no control over his voice, and in quest of tone security so gripped his throat as to create throaty, muffled, baritone qualities, through the unnaturalness of which he was unable to sing ten minutes without becoming tired. The "wobble" was the fundamental source of all the mischief.

THE CURE: The swift crescendo. (See *Vocalism: Its Structure and Culture*, page 36). I caused him to attack the note very softly—merely hum it—then to increase the breath and concentration of power very swiftly, singing a quick crescendo. The expedient was at once successful, for his voice never wavered. I made him produce each note in this manner. The consequence was the pressure of the swift crescendo breath held his voice in such a vice that it could not wobble, and the singer obtained such natural control that all pressure on the throat was relieved and the quality brightened into that of the

pure sustained tenor. Afterwards, when the singer forgot to apply this cure and became unsteady, he was able to recover at the command of "Crescendo!" I next worked at flowing legato phrases, applying the crescendo principle to the group of notes as a phrase, instead of to each separate note, and the vibrato with its accompanying evils vanished.

Remember, therefore, when a note trembles or hesitates, swiftly increase the pressure of breath, thus seizing it in a vice.

PIN IT WITH YOUR BREATH!

THE VOWEL "I"

ANOTHER singer produced wretched tones whenever the sustained vowel "i" occurred in a word. The tone was reedy, nasal, or scattered, and vocal movement disturbed.

REMEDY: So long as the sustained "i" sound is to continue, sing "ah"; then sharply terminate the note with acute "e," as in "eat." If it should be necessary to slightly prolong the "e," sing it very softly.

WHEEZY TONE

A LADY singer with a naturally good voice sang so indolently as to create wheezy, breathy qualities throughout most of her range.

THE REASON: She allowed her tones, which should have been sustained, to melt away in mere sighs, through neglect of that crescendo breath pressure which concentrates, metallises, or rounds the tone.

At other times she would go to the further extreme by overcharging her notes with breath which, escaping unvocalised (through a scattered or indecisive mouth), became audible in hissing sensations, and a too open and loose tone was extravagantly reflected in the head. Wrong or changing mouth positions of faulty pronunciation were answerable for these latter defects, as well as indifferent breath management.

A VOCAL TWANG

THIS peculiar quality of tone is a common vocal fault, characteristic of street and pantomime singers, but often acquired by concert-room vocalists.

THE CAUSE: Prevailing mouth position too squarely open, or scattered; teeth open too horizontally; lips not sufficiently rounded, so that many notes result in hard, twangy tone, similar to that of an unsophisticated child with a high, hard, piercing voice.

REMEDIES: The position of the mouth-opening needs to be inverted: that is, made rounder and smaller, or converted into a narrow, perpendicular oval to produce more sombre and richer tone.




Or, for bright quality, employ an extended, nearly closed, smiling slit, with the stretch of the mouth corners which takes away the cheeks from the teeth, providing a tone outlet at each corner of the mouth to relieve the reedy breath pressure upon the centre teeth.

The lips should more fully cover the teeth to obviate the reediness created by the un-

vocalised breath escaping through the interstices of the exposed teeth.

Slurred phrasing of too strong portamento does not realise the concentration of tone which ensures clean attack and superior vocal qualities.

High notes should be sung with the extended mouth.

The square openings given in the list of mouth positions can be used to modify either grave or gay tones. For example: If the extended position  results in too bright or thin tone on, say, acute "e," use this square opening  or the extended mouth thus: 

Upon the same lines the student may improve other vowel sounds.

Sustain by holding notes at equal power throughout and cultivate the legato flow. Endeavour to acquire even quality rather than power—the latter can be produced later, and is only a question of further breath pressure.

A THROATY CONSONANT

A VOCALIST experienced much difficulty in singing the word "rain." A most pronounced throaty quality ensued. Indeed, this student's production was often so remote in the mouth as to reveal throaty qualities. The trouble respecting the word I at once found arose from the wrong treatment of the letter "r." The vocalist attempted sustained tone on this consonant, singing "er-r." Of course, such a delivery tied the tongue in a knot, resulting in tense contraction, which smothered the voice in the throat.

The difficulty was at once overcome by one flick or upward turn of the tongue on the preliminary "r" (which an experienced singer would employ when desirous of escaping a roll of the tongue, or the hard impression of "r," pronounced "er-r"), and immediate concentration upon the acute vowel "a," as in "hay."

(The flick or single turn above mentioned is explained in *Vocalism* on page 53, commencing line 8, where the consonant "r" is treated; also in *Elocution*, page 48, line 10.)

This singer had disregarded the inviolable

rule of sustaining the vowel sound throughout the note, and, instead, endeavoured to preserve the impossible er-r- (or burr) impression of "r" at least half through the word. Such treatment of either a preliminary or final "r" is seldom admissible. The single turn of the tongue, or, occasionally, the roll, may, however, be appropriately employed. Neglect of this form is responsible for that vulgar pronunciation of the word "hear" which converts it into two syllables, thus: "he-ur." To flick the "r" as I have suggested demands a slightly extended or smiling mouth position which, bringing the production forward, takes the voice out of the throat. Concentrating upon acute "a" (in "rain") throughout the note likewise assists the forward production which relieves throatiness.

THE MELODRAMATIC "UGH!"

MANY vocalists have borrowed from the errors of grand opera that disagreeable short "u" or "ugh" which the victim of a stabbing affray involuntarily utters. It is a staccato groan. In opera this affectation is used frequently, without the shadow of emotional appropriateness. Other singers sometimes give utterance to the same effect without knowing it. The fault is a disagreeable one. It occurs after final "n's," "l's," and "m's."

THE CAUSE: In the case of "n" and "l" the tongue presses the upper gums. The above fault appears because the singer removes his tongue from the gums BEFORE his tone is silenced.

THE CURE: Keep the tongue tip pressed to the upper gums until the voice ceases.

The same fault occurs when in singing final "m" the lips are permitted to open before the voice is hushed.

The faulty singer in the above case will produce, instead of the word "come," "cum-muh"; "still" he will convert into "stil-luh"; and "done" into "dun-nuh."

THROAT COMPRESSION

A LIGHT baritone, with good natural material that included a crisp, resonant ring, when unencumbered by throat compression, sang under effort of constant constraint.

I brought this voice forward to the proper position as follows:—Impressed upon him the necessity of not trying to sing, urged him to hum. I employed the acute vowel “e,” produced by the square mouth or horizontal slit. Used a partial smile. At first the singer did not realise the acute “e” (by reason of his lips drooping at the corners) and he sang too forcibly. Made him close his teeth until he could obtain the acute sound softly. He then sang “e” with the teeth slightly open. When he produced the vowel very softly, so as to make the “e” glitter by very close concentration, he was able to increase the tone in crescendo form without changing the quality of tone, and the throatiness was obviated. The other vowels he sang with purity, and without throatiness, whenever he commenced the tone by a mere whisper, which he could immediately convert into an increasing volume of purity, devoid of all throaty tendencies.

VOICE BLOCKING

A BASS voice had difficulty in moving from one interval to another. It bumped, or blocked in such a way that the progression was stilted and clumsy.

This singer used too much muscular force. He tried to SING instead of HUMMING, and exerted influence upon his throat, as though determined to control that organ. Now if the throat is allowed to do its own work in its own natural way, execution becomes a simple matter. The machinery of the throat will move itself (but cannot be forced). If the vocalist sing softly, leave his throat alone, and allow it to govern itself, it will smoothly and naturally drop the respective notes as though oiled.

Let the student try this, and he will soon notice that the machinery of the throat will automatically deliver the tones like water dropping from the wet finger-end.

SEPULCHRAL TONE

A YOUNG and inexperienced singer's voice lodged in his throat. It was confined there by that restraint which a person exerts in gargling. The tone was also strongly nasal and the flow of breath the singer held severely in check. The general effect was sepulchral. The compression in the throat blocked the nasal passage, hence the nasal tone.

REMEDY: Adhere to the pure vowel position of the mouth; make the lips the reed and breathe the tone forward to this point, maintaining a loose throat. Feel as if breathing with the throat, and compress the tone at the lips only. Commence each note softly and slightly increase the power by a steady crescendo. Do not attempt to hold back the breath, but allow it to flow by the easy, natural pressure of its own weight—poise the note with the breath. Forget you have a nose.

“BREATHE WITH THE THROAT”

I HAVE used the above sentence, and frequently found it suggestive, though, of course, we do not breathe with our throats. The expression, however, serves to induce students to release that grip of the throat which exerts such a vicious influence upon the organ.

I can only describe what I term “breathe with the throat” as follows: After eating a peppermint we experience a clear and buoyant sensation in the chest, throat, and mouth—as if they were each emitting breath from the pores. The throat seems to breathe from its very openness. Preserving this free and open sensation is what I mean by “breathing with the throat.” Through experiment the singer will readily acquire the facility.

HOW I DEAL WITH THE BREATH PROBLEM

A TEACHER recently wrote to me in some perplexity asking how she could get young children to manage the breath in singing.

I will endeavour to give a few pertinent conclusions drawn from my own experience and practice:—

Nervousness, sudden fright, or over-anxiety all exercise a disturbing influence upon the vocal student's breath. These conditions affect the young singer thus: They cause him to suddenly catch his breath and block the natural flow of wind. Fright, nervousness, or undue anxiety attacks the singer in the pit of the stomach and impedes the organs which should have free play. To avoid nervousness or anxiety, abstain as much as possible from mentioning the breath or breathing. The student who can remain in a state of restful comfort is not prone to these attacks. Do not perplex him with breath theories. I tell my pupils not to attempt to do quite all I ask them; that is, to underdo rather than overdo

the task I set them, but in all circumstances to remain perfectly at ease. I endeavour to make them do the requisite thing, as it were, unconsciously. I beat around the bush so that I shall not excite their anxiety. In the first place, I make them sure of the mouth position necessary for the vowel in question. When they have attained this by easy composure, I let them just hum or breathe the note. To take them away from the confusing consciousness of breathing I hold out my finger, asking them to carefully note the movement of my hand. The finger remains perfectly motionless whilst they are commencing a soft note; then I move my finger from left to right, telling them to gradually sing louder or softer as the finger indicates. The effect of this is to simplify matters by concentrating all their faculties upon the necessity of singing as my finger directs. If they do not succeed in producing a good tone, or they exhibit any unsteadiness of voice, they are either not adhering to the true vowel sound or are not sufficiently obeying the movement of the finger, which indicates the slow crescendo. In dealing with both children and grown-up people, many teachers make the great mistake of trying to obtain too much voice in the first instance. If power is at-

tempted at the onset the quality is never so good, and the proper control of voice or breath cannot be obtained. When once a very soft, restful, steady tone is acquired (and steadiness may most readily be obtained through the initial soft tone), the student has perfect command of the breath. If a moderate, even crescendo is then attempted, the singer feels at once that he knows what he is doing, and that he has the necessary purchase on and control of his voice. Possibly, in the first instance, the slow crescendo may be difficult to obtain. If that be the case, I move the hand from left to right quicker, indicating a swifter crescendo. The singer then has not time to hesitate or become unsteady. If the student show that he has not commenced with sufficient breath, instead of talking about the breath and pressures I say, "You have not taken in sufficient wind to last throughout the note." If I find them taking a hurried, surface-gasp of breath, I remind them that they have to hold the note some time, where-upon involuntarily they fill the lungs. As a rule, when they are concentrating their mind upon a correct mouth position, the true sound of the vowel and the moving hand, which indicates increasing power, they soon find that this attention gives them the freest concen-

tration and control—the proper purchase. Now, the great art of sustaining consists in using as little breath as possible, maintaining a light and perfectly steady even output of tone. Children almost invariably at the early stages expel their breath in one sudden sigh, which empties their little lungs. On the plan which I have already indicated they conserve their breath, and every particle is turned into tone, if care is taken to see that their gradual increase of power is so regular that it does not falter, diminish, or pump. We get the best tone by commencing our notes softly. If accent is demanded, then the note should be commenced piano and immediately changed to forte, in such a way that the softer tone becomes submerged in the louder beyond identity. If we commence it forte by means of the explosive we are apt to overshoot the mark, scatter the tone, and obtain bad results. Power in singing in the first instance is of little consequence. The soft, smooth, steady tone is the desideratum. More power simply means more concentration of breath pressure. This can be added in time; but if a voice, young or old, is to be built on the right lines, the commencement of tone in the first instance must be soft. Attention should be paid to consonants as well as vowels, because the

former assist the flow of tone by uniting vowel to vowel, syllable to syllable, so that the voice moves over the phrase as though it were oiled.

There may be cases where an indifferent child or adult is so listless in emitting sound as to cause the voice to droop or become lifeless in tone, and in such cases it is well to experiment with a louder attack; but the tone should never be so excessive as to scatter the voice and place it beyond control. As the child advances, the three attacks dealt with in *Vocalism*, viz., the swift crescendo, the check breath, and the explosive, should be occasionally employed. Many teachers have discountenanced the early use of the diminuendo. I do not altogether agree with them; that is, so far as the natural, gentle subsidence of tone from a powerful note is concerned. In the earlier stages, it is better to go direct from forte to piano rather than attempt to prolong the diminuendo. At the onset all that need be done in the way of diminuendo is, after a fairly powerful note, to allow the singer to let the voice exhaust itself by naturally closing the mouth. Care must be taken that the breath is then controlled. This security cannot be preserved, however, without the exercise of some breath pressure even

on a diminuendo. Just as the lips are meeting it will give additional control of the softer tone if the pupils stretch the lips slightly to a gentle smile. But the crux of the whole matter is in first teaching the child or man to acquire a steady sustained note by the softest power, which amounts to little more than a humming of the note.

Every line of instruction in this series of books tends to induce the art of breathing unconsciously. I have added the above for the benefit of those who may read *Vocalism*, *Elocution*, and *Vocal Faults* so superficially that they do not recognise this fact.

TO ACQUIRE BRILLIANCY

WE frequently hear otherwise good voices which contain tones of a dull, leaden character. The element lacking in this case is brilliancy. The cause of the dull quality is lack of tone concentration. Tenor voices take on baritone characteristics in the absence of that concentration. To acquire brilliant tone the production must be brought forward and made to impinge upon a narrow point well forward in the mouth. The tone that is produced remote in the mouth, or in the throat, however concentrated, will be thick, dull, and unpleasant, but the concentration nearer the teeth results in brilliancy. Now, it is sometimes difficult to acquire this focus; therefore, I am often obliged to tell a pupil to bring the tone forward to a "needle point," so far as concentration is concerned. I ask them to do this until the note "pings" or "glitters," whereupon the softer elements of the voice round the note. The difference between a concentrated tone which acquires the brilliancy I have suggested, and the leaden quality of looser composition, is that dis-

crepancy which exists between a leaden and a silver "bullet." I say "bullet," because all tones must be well rounded. Attacking short "i" with acute "e" introduces the glitter or gleam of tone. Pronouncing the shorter vowels with a more open mouth (such as short "u's" in the "ah" position) imparts a metallic coating to the note. In sopranos the smiling mouth, with the tone mainly emerging from the mouth corners, gives this silvery sheen to the voice. The long narrow opening, or slit, in the mouth of the bass or baritone sometimes induces reedy, splintery, or sandy tones; but these may be modified to a more agreeable quality by further concentration upon a narrow point nearer the two front middle teeth. From what I have said the student will rightly infer that for brilliancy the tone must be focussed to that fine point which I have termed the "needle point." Adhering to true vowel pronunciation will ensure the brilliancy of concentration. Tones which are not thus focussed I term scattered notes.

EXAMPLE: To focus acute "e" (when in the solemn mood), produce it from the tiniest mouth opening, holding the vowel in the smallest possible space between the tip of the tongue and the two upper, central teeth. Power is not required on this vowel—the

softer the better—but it must “gleam.” It is a quality similar to that of the oboe.

In singing open vowels there must still be concentration; but not to so fine a point. It will be sufficient if we secure fully rounded notes of the utmost compactness, consistent with the more open nature of the vowels employed.

CHROMATICS

IN my previous works (*Vocalism: Its Structure and Culture, from an English Standpoint*, and *Elocution: Its First Principles*, both of which should be studied in conjunction with the present volume) I have been so engrossed with the mechanics of voice building I have neglected to mention the subject of Chromatics. Whilst these intervals may be acquired in songs and other vocal works, I would nevertheless, advise singers to occasionally practise at least the scale of C in semitones, in order to become expert in the gauging of half as well as whole tones. This develops the cultivation of the ear, the sense of pitch, and facile vocal movement. To acquire execution I prefer, as a rule, to study those lyrics which contain rapid passages of the construction a singer most frequently meets in vocal concert works.

TONGUE TROUBLES

THE above comprise many vocal complaints, and are responsible for innumerable disquieting complications. I will not attempt to enumerate them, because the less a singer thinks of his tongue, the better. There will be no tongue troubles if the student forget he has a tongue, and remember always to acquire the mouth positions which give the respective unadulterated vowels. The position of the tongue helps to define the vowel. That member will always take its direction from the lips. Therefore, acquire the one and the other obeys automatically, the breath action also responding in sympathy with the lips.

SYMPATHETIC RELATION OF LIPS, TONGUE, AND BREATH

WHILST many vocalists are conscious of the part played by the tongue in dealing with consonants, comparatively few have discovered that it takes various positions and shapes in assisting the lips to acquire the respective vowel sounds. In speech the tongue performs its office automatically; in song it will do likewise if permitted the necessary freedom. It is difficult, almost impossible, to consciously train the tongue; but it can be governed unconsciously through the shaping of the lips in pursuit of perfect pronunciation. The less a singer thinks of his tongue the better, otherwise he will court trouble and disappointment. It is necessary to bear in mind the following points:

1. The tongue moves in sympathy with the lips as the latter assume the various mouth positions of the respective vowel sounds.
2. The tongue throws up such consonants as "t," "d," "l," "s," "r"; and it may profitably be remembered that

the point of the tongue in these cases briefly touches the upper gums. Even this operation should be so practised, however, that its execution becomes involuntary—as in speech.

3. The quickness and accuracy of the tongue on preliminary consonants govern both attack and tone quality.

I build voices on pronunciation because I have found it the speediest and most natural method. I will endeavour briefly to show how it works out: When we get the best vowel sound we have secured the most favourable mouth position. I note the lip opening and employ a sign fairly suggestive of it. I teach the pupil to at once take that mouth-opening. There is then no need to bother about the tongue, for that member immediately takes its cue from the lips. There is likewise no necessity to think of breath management, because the breath, acting in concert with tongue and lips, comes forth automatically to fill the aperture. Concentration of the mind upon the mouth position brings into sympathetic, but unconscious, action all the forces which contribute to vocal quality and movement. Any hesitancy or uncertainty as to lip movement will so hamper free tongue and breath action as to disturb the quality of the voice.

I need not go further in describing the movements of the tongue, because the less a singer thinks of it the better. In support of my theory, however, I will add sufficient to show how the singer may test the matter for himself.

Let the student sing the vowel "o" as it should be sung, viz., with the round "o" opening of the lips. While the sound of the perfect "o" continues insert the tip of the smallest finger, and he will find that the tongue has retreated to the back of the mouth and so drawn itself up as to help to create the roundest "o"-shaped cavity in the mouth, in conformity with the "o" shape of the lips.

If he try the same experiment while singing "ah," he will discover the tongue lies flat in the mouth, hollowed in the centre, with the tongue-tip nearly touching the lower front teeth.

On acute "e" the tongue tip moves up, nearly touching the edges of the upper teeth.

On "s" the tip almost reaches the centre of the mouth's roof.

On "a" the tongue is almost on a level with the edges of the lower teeth.

"Awe" not so far backward as "ah," nor so backward as "o."

And so the tongue's shape and position

change to assist the respective vowel sounds.

The lips influence all these tongue movements and pronunciation governs the action of the lips. If we do not pronounce properly we disarrange—throw out of gear—the mechanism of our entire vocal equipment, which includes breath.

From the above we may draw three conclusions:

1. That perfect pronunciation secures the best resonant mouth positions and most appropriate flow of the breath.
2. That lip government of contributory vocal parts is simple, automatic, and direct.
3. That the tongue largely governs the various sounds of articulation and responds naturally to the action of the lips.

PHONETICS OF VOWELS AND THEIR VARIANTS

I HAVE been much impressed with the weakness of even educated people regarding the subject of phonetics in relation to vowels and their variants. Words are seldom written as pronounced, therefore singers and speakers can hardly hope to succeed if they remain so ill versed in this subject as to be unable to distinguish the phonetic sound of every vowel and its variant as each occurs in written words or syllables. Much of the imperfect pronunciation we hear in speaking and singing is attributable to this want of discrimination. The long sounds of vowels appear to occasion the least difficulty. The short sounds, however, become an endless source of trouble both to singers and speakers. Unless each can promptly and faithfully be produced, vocalists cannot make the most effective use of their voices. Certainly they will be unable advantageously to employ the suggestions I have offered as to mouth positions, pronunciation, enunciation, etc. It is necessary, therefore, for all singers (and

speakers) to analyse each word and syllable in order to understand the sounds they are expected to produce.

The following hints may assist the reader (more particularly in singing) to master this branch of the subject:

The vowel sound of "put" is short "oo," as in "foot."

"Love," short "u," pronounced "luhv."

"Cue," long "u," pronounced "ke-u," with accent of slight crescendo breath pressure on "u."

"Few," the same: "fe-u."

"Fruit," long "oo," "froot."

"Duke," long "u": "de-uk," pressure on the "u."

"Daughter," "daugh" as in "awe," "daw"; "ter," sung as "tah-r." The real vowel sound in "ter" is short "u," but this can never be sustained satisfactorily without attacking it on "ah." Hold "ah" almost throughout the note, then, the lips closing to realise "r" by one flick or upward turn of the tongue, the process will take in sufficiently the real short "u" sound, rendering the pronunciation faithfully, from the most resonant mouth positions. Therefore, attack all short "u's" with "ah," but do not over-accentuate this vowel sound. Let each element evolve

smoothly and proportionately. A singer who, in such cases, is prone to overdo the "ah" sound, may surmount his difficulty by trying to sing short "u" with the "ah" position of the mouth. (See "Mouth Positions.")

Similarly, other short vowels, difficult to sustain, may be treated; for example: In dealing with short "i" (as in "if") attack it with acute "e," as in "eat." This will give a metallic note of buoyant purity and brilliancy, and, at the same time, perfect pronunciation, as it reaches the audience. This plan opens out the tone. To aim only at short "i" in attack, closes in the voice and does not realise the true pronunciation, because ALL FORCES WEAKEN IN DISTANCE; therefore, allowance must be made for inevitable leakage.

"Ball" carries the sound of "a," as in "awe," and is pronounced "bawl."

"Value": "a" as in "at": *val-e-u-oo*; "e-u-oo" blended smoothly as follows: "e" and "oo" held briefly, "u" sustained; "oo" being merely the shortest of final impressions.


"Crawl": "a" as in "awe"—"krawl."

"Quay": "kee."

"Lily": "Le-i-li" (sung with smiling mouth). The acute "e" in "lee" will become attenuated into the short "i" as the power diminishes. The short "i" in the last and

unaccented syllable "li" does not demand acute "e," though some voices which are inclined to thickness may be lightened and brightened by the slightest trace of "e" in attacking even the last syllable of this word.


"Youth": "e--oo-th." Dismiss all thought of "y," sing "e-oo" and terminate with soft "th." This word involves a principle singers and speakers should understand, viz., the necessity of a crescendo on the "oo" impression.

"Arm." This word shows even more clearly the importance of breath pressure in pronunciation. Phonetically, "arm" is represented thus:  The diagram shows a-ah-rm.

where the breath pressure increases and the voice expands. The tone, of course, is continuous and not detached in syllables. The phonetic letters cannot be written otherwise than as above. The process consists of more and more concentration of the voice on the vowel sound, as indicated in the diagram. In singing holding notes, this growing concentration on vowels not only perfects pronunciation but induces tone qualities unattainable by any other means.

"Yet" is attacked by long "e," held briefly, followed by short "e" (as in "bet"),

which is sustained about twice as long as the initial vowel and sung crescendo. The consonant "t" delivered delicately and quickly completes the word. Do not grope for "y," sing "ee-e-t."

"Youth":  Sing "e" and "u"
e-u-oo-th.

briefly, each of the same duration; hold "oo," and end the word quickly with a soft "th." The proper proportions will readily commend themselves to the teacher, if not to the singer.

"Alarm": short "a" for "a," "ah" in "larm"—a-lah-rm. "Ah" mouth position on "a," fuller "ah" on "lar"; quick flick of tongue for "r" and pressed lips on "m." Crescendo on the vowel of "larm."

"Roaring": Ro-reeng.

"Resolve": Re-zau-l-v; tongue the "l," teeth on lower lip for "v."

"Morn": Mau-rn. Hold "mau"; flick the tongue for "r," press tongue on upper gums for "n."

"Muse": Me-u-ooze.

"Knew": Ne-u-oo.

"Easy": E-zi; with faint touch of long "e" in "zi."


"Certain": Sur-ten. Short "u," "ah" position, with a sensation of "ah" on the short "u" variant if the note is sustained.

Examples of short vowels: "A" in "hat"; "e" in "wet"; "i" in "it"; "o" in "not"; "u" in "but"; "oo" in "foot."


I have now offered sufficient examples to indicate a method of analysis by which I hope the student may become proficient in the subject of phonetics, and would recommend him to devote some of his spare moments to discovering the true vowel sounds of the words he reads or sings. It must be understood, however, that the above remarks refer mainly to the SINGING of English, though many examples apply almost as forcibly to public speaking. It is an excellent plan to analyse words we meet in poetry, prose, newspaper articles, &c.; also to discuss with intelligent friends the phonetics of words employed in vocal music.


THE YAWN, OR "AH!" SECTIONS


ALL correct mouth positions evolve from the open ah, and come naturally in the course of closing the mouth.

Full yawn, "ah," as in "father" 

Half " "a," " "hat" 

Third " "e," " "bet" 

"a," " "hay" 

"e," " "eat" 


The tongue lies flat for full or open vowels. The tongue tip (only) rises nearer the top teeth for acute "e's." The tongue focuses the "e," by condensing the resonant mouth space.

MOUTH POSITIONS

EMOTIONAL tone qualities may be divided into two classes—the grave and the gay, represented by distinct forms of mouth or lip position. The pouting or rounded mouth expresses the graver emotions; the smiling or extended lips, the brighter or gayer tone attributes. In seeking to impart appropriate tone-colour the singer should analyse each syllable in order to determine, firstly, the true vowel sound; secondly, the emotional character of the word; thirdly, the emotional class to which it belongs, viz., grave or gay. It is not sufficient to attain merely the approximate pronunciation, or even what might pass as the “correct” sound. It is essential to acquire every element of the word, so that its emotional significance may be impressively interpreted. Perfect and distinct mouth positions exist for every vowel, diphthong, and consonant impression. Each may be calculated with mathematical precision. It must be borne in mind that between those extreme positions, represented by the grave, on the one hand, and the gay, on the other, there are

sufficient intermediate mouth positions to convey every shade of timbre or tone-colour demanded by the English language. These positions I represent by certain signs I have successfully employed, which, after brief explanation, indicate to the student, most accurately, the respective facial conditions demanded by perfect pronunciation and tone-colour.


I will now endeavour to submit these signs and explain their working. It has always been my practice to write them over the notes of the pupil's music. They are soon able to interpret them with the rapidity of sight reading.

"A" ("ah"), as in "far," I indicate thus: 

This mouth position may be promptly acquired at the experimental stage by an indolent yawn.


I often adopt the yawning expedient because it removes all tension of the facial muscles and jaw, and creates a natural, restful, vocal position. The reposeful feeling created induces a steady, natural flow of breath and a restfully efficient tone. Vocal resonance then becomes but a question of breath force.

As all mouths differ, more or less, in shape, the "ah" position may have to be slightly

exaggerated, or modified, as the case may demand, but the general outline of the aperture remains practically the same. If more severity, or concentration, of tone is required to illustrate a particular mood on the vowel "ah," then the opening should be very slightly depressed at the sides or mouth corners. The opening would then need to be this shape: 


Rather firm hold of the lips will often be sufficient to acquire the graver character of tone required.



In tightening the hold upon the lips, on round positions such as "O," do not let the contraction extend to the OUTER edges of the lips, but endeavour to confine the hold, or contraction, to the INSIDE of the lips. The slightest immovable stiffening of them will be sufficient, if accompanied by immovable jaws. Effect this with comfortable firmness, but without any undue rigidity, which would occasion "setting" of the throat.



If the "ah" sound need to become pleasant, or so amiable and sunny in character as to indicate a partial smile, then the arch of the upper lip should be extended, thus: 


The more amiable the tone demanded, the gentler should be the breath flow; the severer the tone quality, the harder the breath-pressure. The breath, however, involuntarily


sympathises with the expression of the singer's face and conforms to his mouth opening.

"A," as in "awe," represents the severest sound of the vowel, and this I indicate thus: 


The lips and teeth for the position must be well opened perpendicularly, and contracted at the sides of the opening. Dealing with certain mouths, I sometimes indicate the requisite position thus:  , or  . When interpreting this variant of the vowel "a" it is necessary to cultivate the feeling of "awe" and express the mood in the face. A singer cannot impart the true sentiment to the word with a smiling, horizontally extended position of the lips. Every vowel has its emotional tone-colour, and the face should indicate the characteristic expression each conveys.


"A," as in "hat," approximates to about two thirds of a full yawn, and is slightly more extended horizontally, thus:  . In certain moods, it may be  .


"A," as in "hay," partakes of the oblong, or what I prefer to term square, opening, thus: 

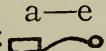
In dealing with small mouths and inflexible lips, I often insist on more extended opening, horizontally: acute "a"  . (The straight line means more open teeth than on "e".)

The lips are then stretched in a smiling position to nearly their fullest extent, and the pressure of wind on the teeth, which creates a reedy, nasal sound, is so relieved as to give a clear, bright, liquid quality. The result is effected in this way: the ends of the upper lip are slightly elevated and the cheeks so drawn away from the side teeth that the resonance space is increased. The tone then comes more through the corners of the mouth and is of a transparent or liquid quality, buoyant and inspiriting.




Let the student place one finger between the side teeth and the cheek, sing, and he will realise how what I call the "rings" created by extended and elevated mouth corners open out the tone. The more he separates the cheeks from the side teeth the more lucid will be the tone. This mouth position I indicate thus: .





It is generally sufficient to sketch it thus: .

If the square mark for acute "a" does not achieve the requisite pronunciation and quality, it is well to employ this diagram: .


The final of "a" (as in "hay") is "e," as in "eat." In dealing with a novice I mark acute "a" ("hay") thus:  ^{a—e} The square



mouth is preserved throughout the note; the extended or ring position, being a final, very briefly cuts off the tone. Any prolongation of the "e" will result in unpleasant reediness. When necessary to slightly hold the final "e," it should be sung very softly indeed.


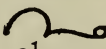
The positions for acute "e" (as in "me") I define thus:  if unemotional;  if grave;  if gay.

It may be necessary in certain moods to locate the production of the "e" tone on the middle teeth. In that case the sound is held, or located, as it were, between the tip of the elevated tongue and the centre upper teeth, at the first attack of the note, whereupon the reediness is escaped by gradually and slightly opening the teeth. The position of the opening for attack will be either a small oval, thus: , or a small square  gradually opening to , or . The reediness of acute "e" may always be dispelled by slightly opening the mouth; but in attacking the vowel, the singer cannot realise the perfect pronunciation without first concentrating the sound on the teeth. Reediness under these circumstances does not reveal itself in brief attack so long as one temporises by immediately opening the teeth, slightly, to relieve the acuteness of the vowel, if such course is found necessary. Thin

vowels may often be softened, or rounded, by this means, or vice versa.



When a singer is inclined to produce a thin tone by a too extended mouth on acute "e," I denote the position by a longer and shallower square than I employ for "a," as in "hay," thus:  e


Short "e," as in "bet," demands a slightly deeper and shorter square than "a," opening to "ah"—thus: . This represents the graver sound. To lighten it with sunnier tone, slightly extend the square, thus: 


There is no one position for long "i," and the vowel must be treated as a diphthong, viz.: ah  (held throughout the note or notes) and acute "e" treated as the briefest final. "I" is therefore indicated thus:  ah—e.


By this plan we attack and sustain most of the notes through the more favourable and open vocal position: ("ah"). The extended lips of a closing mouth (which on the passage take in the short "u" sound) deliver the briefest final "e," soften, vignette, or taper the stronger tone-colour of the sustained "ah." Thus we obtain a fuller, more resonant emotional note than by attempting the impossible "i," groping for a single vocal position which cannot exist.


A singer must generally aim for a little more than he thinks he wants in the way of pronunciation, as the tendency is invariably to fall short of the true vowel sound.


Short "i," as in "give," should be attacked with acute "e":  whereupon the mouth changes to , realising a more resonant short "i."


"O," as in "owe," necessitates a round opening, marked thus:  —the exact shape of the letter.

If the mood of the word be severe, then the position demands a slightly smaller, more contracted circle:  the lips must be firmer—more tense—and the breath flow fiercer.

If the "O" tone need to be more amiable, persuasive, or affectionate, then employ a larger and more oval smiling opening, thus:  and softer pressure of breath.


"O" cannot be completed without its brief final "oo" (as in "moon"), marked  —the smallest, round, vocal opening.





"Oo" when sustained demands a more oval position, designated thus: 


It is interesting to observe that a line drawn around "oo" gives the sustained "oo" mouth position. Example: 


The breath on final "oo" needs to be softer

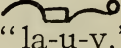
than extended "oo," otherwise a heady or foghorn quality will result.

To acquire the "o" sound of "not" necessitates almost the mouth position of "awe": 



"U" demands three mouth positions, evolved without revealing the process. It commences with acute "e" by the extended or smiling mouth, marked thus:  then follows the liquid "u" sound from the brighter "oo" mouth, thus:  and terminates briefly with the more closed "oo," thus:  . When the three elements are smoothly and skilfully evolved, a wonderfully beautiful, liquid note is produced, highly expressive of the vowel. The combination is marked  . The accent is on the second position.



When "u" is sung with the final "oo" opening () alone, the voice becomes closed in, stifled, breathy, and devoid of liquid resonance.




Short "u's" as in "but," should be attacked through "ah" position (saying "ah" in the first instance), which resolves gradually into the acute, extended "e" opening  Sing short "u" instead of "e," viz.: ah-u.

The marks for "love" are  "la-u-v," written thus, "love." The mouth almost immediately closing on "la," does all that is

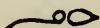
requisite to realise the short "u" in "luv."





Short "u" can be sung by some mouths with the square opening, thus: , but the position must still resolve itself into the extended or closing mouth, thus: 

"O" becomes a diphthong in the word "boy" ("oi"), and should be treated as "awe-e," written:  or 

"O" in "how" is another diphthong, and consists of "a" as in "father," and "oo" as in "moon." The "ah" sound, written , is sustained throughout the note or notes, and "oo," marked thus:  or , according to mood—whether grave or gay.


If the "oo" sound is loud it must be but briefly touched; if soft, it may be longer sustained.


"U" in "mute" is pronounced simply "e" (acute) and "u" .




"U" in "but" is marked  or  according to the shade of the mood (viz., light or dark). Aim for "ah," close and extend the mouth to  gradually, and you have a good, open tone foundation from the "ah" attack, which resolves into short "u" by the slowly-closing mouth reaching this position; 

The latter tone is finally softened and vignetted by the extended mouth, giving

the liquid rings in the mouth corners, viz.:

 The proper evolution of the vowel will soon be realised with practice, and become involuntary.

When the pupil is familiar with the signs of the respective mouth-positions, it will be but necessary to sketch, over the note bearing the word, the first portion of the vocal diagram. For example: instead of writing "ah-e" to represent a long "i," abbreviate the sign, thus:  ah.

When the student has once mastered the various mouth positions sufficiently to take them promptly and accurately without pre-meditation, he will be able, for all practical purposes, to reduce their classification to three positions, viz.: "round," "square," and "extended." These may be distinguished by the following signs: , , .

It is often necessary for a round or open vowel position to be resolved into the extended mouth, in order that the tongue tip may more comfortably reach the upper gums so as to enunciate a consonant. This amounts merely to a natural closing of the mouth, concluding with just the suspicion of half-smiling mouth-corners. (A touch of sunshine.)

The change of position has the effect of softening, vignetting, or tapering the hea-

vier vowel tone, adding a delicate variety of tint, which shades, so to speak, into the next vowel colour or consonant impression. It also materially assists firm and fluent note progression.

No person can speak clearly without employing his tongue, and this member depends upon active, expressive lips for its motive inspiration. Cramped lips restrict the tongue and tie it in such hopeless knots that the voice loses its natural mobility and best vocal quality. Uncertainty as to mouth position and lip movement creates hesitating, imperfect attack, which, in turn, checks the free flow of breath by which resonant tone and facile execution are attained. The charm of good speaking and singing largely depends upon fluency.

The condensed "e" is a secure position, therefore often useful for reaching and sustaining a high note which cannot be perfectly controlled by a more open position. It is possible to sufficiently pronounce almost any vowel when the lips are thus formed, provided the mood is sufficiently sombre and appropriate to admit of the tone character this opening induces.









There are not two voices of identical timbre; but, roughly, all may be divided into bright or

rich organs. The former need to employ the pathetic "e" delivery, whilst the latter may often obtain the same result by using the medium "e" opening.





In selecting mouth positions, the peculiarities of voices (viz., whether grave or gay) should always be taken into account and dealt with on the lines I have suggested.

TABLE OF MOUTH POSITIONS

THE following concise list of mouth positions may be found convenient for ready reference. Their variants are explained in the previous chapter.



"A" as in "hay"	
"A" " " "father"	
"A" " "awe"	
"A" " "hat"	
"E" " "eat"	
"E" " "bet"	
	
"I" " "lie"	ah-e
"I" " "bit"	

Aim for acute "e" in attack.

"O" as in "owe"	
"O" " "not"	
"U" " "mute"	
	e-u-oo
"U" as in "but" ..	

ah-short u-closed mouth

These three positions are evolved by the mouth closing slowly from the attacking or "ah" position.


“Oo” as in “moon” sustained... 
final, .

“Oi” as in “boy” .. 
awe and grave “e”

“Ow” as in “how”.....  (ah-oo).

The signs above indicated can only suggest the mouth positions required. It is impossible to draw the exact appearance of the mouth-opening; and even if it were, as mouths differ, one detailed drawing could not apply to all singers. But the principles set forth in my marks will apply to every one. Working on these diagrams, when the pupil arrives at the mouth positions giving the best pronunciation (therefore tone), he will feel how his mouth is shaped—round, oval, square, or extended, as the case may be—and associate that mouth-opening with the diagram it most closely resembles. With practice, the student will realise the significance of the signs and the mouth involuntarily open to the requisite positions.

Fix the respective mouth-openings upon the mind by practising before a mirror.

I have met a case wherein I have been compelled to mark the “ah” position thus:  ; and the lips have described this shape.

The slightest movement of the lips is often sufficient to perfect the character of the tone.



It is well, therefore, to underdo rather than exaggerate these changes.


































NOTE! In singing all vowels, focus or concentrate the pressure of breath and unalterable tone quality upon the true, main element of the vowel, whatever may be the mouth position. "Glue" the tone with stronger and stronger pressure to that vowel without relaxing or temporising with its most acute pronunciation. It is only in this way that the tone may be so consolidated, rounded, and vitalised as to secure the best quality. The slightest relaxation introduces foreign elements (specks) into the voice, which create bad notes. Adhere to the principal mouth positions of each vowel throughout its note or notes, and sustain like a church organ; otherwise, fluctuating breath will alter and destroy the purest textures of the voice. Whether a note be loud or soft, firmly pin the tone, by concentration, to the real vowel.







LIKEWISE OBSERVE! Almost invariably, when a singer is satisfied in his own mind that he is holding a sustained note at precisely the same power, he is doing nothing of the kind. The pressure is gradually weakening in force with corresponding deterioration of vocal quality. In such cases the only cure is for the vocalist to possess himself of the idea that the


sustained note must always be treated as a gentle crescendo. Then, instead of his tone fading into leaden dulness, it will appear to the audience rich in the bloom of buoyant life, sustained without effort, perfect in rounded proportions.

TABLE OF VOWEL SHADES

IN extended "e"  the tongue tip lies flatter than in this position: . The first is for the bright mood; the second for the severe or pathetic mood. This principle governs, similarly, other vowels, such as:

<i>Bright</i>		<i>Grave</i>	
"ah" bright,		"ah" grave,	
"awe" bright,		"awe" severe,	
"oo" "		"oo" "	
"O" "		"O" "	
"a" "		"a" "	
"i" short		"i" as in bid.	
"ah" "oo"		"ah" "oo"	  now
<i>Medium</i>		<i>Grave</i>	<i>Gay</i>
A (hay).....			
Ah (father)....			
Awe.....			
A (at).....			
E (eat).....			
E (wet).....		  or	




	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Grave</i>	<i>Gay</i>
I (lie)			
I (in)			
O (owe).....			
O (not)  more extended than awe			
Oo (moon).....			
U (you).....		 (e-u-oo)	
U (but)  (ah, closing to short "u")			
Oi (boy)  (awe, closing to acute "e")			
Ow (how)  (ah, closing to "oo")			



NOTE.—The gay acute "e" sign  may be employed to indicate that the mouth must be closed naturally, from the vowel position, without stretching the lips. In this case the lips neither pout nor smile—merely close restfully.

In passing from "ah" to "e" as in "i" (long) the mouth should close on "ah" and extend gradually to "e", so the vowel may smoothly evolve, and the tone should taper on a soft "e."

MODIFICATIONS OF MOUTH POSITIONS

THE mouth positions I have submitted are subject to some slight modifications necessitated by the mood of the particular word under treatment.

For example: To sing the brightest shade of acute "e" requires the smiling extended lips, and is marked ; the medium or less emotional "e" demands the square mouth, thus: ; the pathetic "e" is not so drawn and thin, therefore must have the solemn condensation, marked . This position may be explained as follows:

The closed "oo" position is the smallest round vocal aperture of the lips: . Pronounce the pathetic, acute "e" almost with the oval "oo" position: . To obtain the true effect will necessitate a slight relaxation of the lips—as though contracting the inside of them, rather than the outside edges. The position of this "e" delivery is akin to that employed when uttering the French "u."

TO GAUGE MOUTH POSITIONS

“A” as in “hay”:

Place the tip of the fore-finger between the teeth, taking care to stretch the lips so that the upper lip does not droop at the corners and disturb the oblong or, as I call it, the “square” opening. A smile will assist in arriving at the true position.

“A” as in “father”:

To arrive at this position yawn lazily, opening the mouth to the fullest, perpendicularly; or, as I sometimes say to my younger pupils, take the biggest possible bite of a large imaginary apple.

“A” as in “awe”:

To promptly acquire this opening, look and feel as though you were imparting some awful news, or, in other words, were saying, “Isn’t it awful?” with all the dismay you could express. This is the mood of that variant of the vowel “A.”

“A” as in “at”:

Half-smile and maintain rather relaxed or lazy lips.

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“E” as in “eat”:

Place the tip of the nail of the fore-finger between the centre of the teeth and carry out the instructions as to stretched lips as in the case of “a” in “hay.”

The singer, having mastered the above positions, will find little difficulty in arriving at the others, because they are all natural sections of the “ah” or full-yawn position.

MY PLAN OF TEACHING

I SELDOM employ scales or exercises.¹ In the first instance, I take some song which offers appropriate opportunity for sustained breath and legato movement. *Belovèd, sleep*, by Slater, is a favourable example, amongst many. I allow the pupil to mentally read, but not pronounce, the first two lines containing the opening idea. Then I ask the vocalist to sing but the first note and syllable. The attack is sure to be unsatisfactory unless the requisite mood is instinctively grasped, which is seldom the case. The first note (especially if an unaccented one), even with singers of experience, is often a stumbling block. (See *Vocalism*, p. 94.)

This opening note, though soft, should be evenly sustained, and, at least, given its full value. But first of all acquire the perfect pronunciation of the vowel (the long "e"). If

¹When I want execution I select just the forms I require from some work which will eventually be sung by the pupil. I believe in building and training the voice upon identical passages actually occurring in concert-room compositions, rather than by means of exercises of a form which will never be required.

the teeth are too nearly closed the "e" will be thin and reedy. Open the teeth a little. The slightest amount is often sufficient to bring the pure "e" without reediness or nasal influence.

When the best position is attained, do not move the lips a hair's-breadth.

Slightly extended smiling lips will probably be required, but it depends upon the pupil's shape of mouth. If habitually loose or extended, it should be opened by a third of a yawn (see *Vocalism*, p. 143) with corners very slightly drawn, more as in pouting. (See *Vocalism*, p. 38.) Having acquired the true "e," next turn attention to the attack and the requisite breath current.

If the pupil is faulty in attack, treat as follows: Should the fault consist of slurring up to the note, employ the check-breath attack delicately. (See *Vocalism*, p. 36.)

This attack ensures fully-charged lungs and a steadier flow of breath, which exert refining influence on the quality of tone.

In attempting the syllable "be," it should be remembered that to pronounce the consonant "b" it is necessary to press the lips together gently and then open the mouth suddenly on the vowel "e." This assists a clean, accurate attack.

Should the pupil have difficulty in singing

the note steadily (through vibrato or other influences), increase the steady pressure of the breath by a slightly swifter flow. It must be remembered that command of voice depends, firstly, upon firm breath pressure (see "Breath Management," page 9); secondly, immovable lips whilst the vowel sound is to continue (page 8.)

On an undemonstrative note of this character, when the check-breath attack is used, there should be no accent—merely a clean, soft striking of the note, followed by sustained gentle pressure. The idea is, firstly, to attain repose and purity of tone without emotional pulsation; otherwise the effect of the next note (which is accented, and demands more emotional colour) will be destroyed by the intensity of the first.

Such attention to the value of contrasts must ever be preserved if one is to avoid monotony and acquire the complementary proportions of refined phrasing.

Having mastered the attack, hold the tone as I have indicated.

The second note is the first of the bar, and bears the syllable "love." Here the mouth position changes to a more open and rounded shape, and there is a change of mood. The tone should become more intensely thoughtful.

The corners of the mouth should, therefore, be slightly drawn, and the tone made to throb by crescendo pressure of breath, the first tone having melted into the second by quiet legato flow. The tone on "love" should be rich and full, though with a certain suppression of emotion suggestive of deep conviction. The singer should convey the impression on the first syllable that the mood denotes contemplative happiness, as the first thought of that love.

The half-smiling mouth gives the bright tinge of tone-colour, which does not, by reason of the soft sustained breath and fixed mouth, interfere with the contemplative or thoughtful character of the first impression. The second note presents a development of the first impulse created by "love."

Affection is supposed to swell the human heart with deeper emotion, and, therefore, demands more intensity of tone.

The second note being the first of the bar, the rhythm needs to be accentuated. A moderate, swift crescendo, attained by gentle breath pressure, will give the throb of feeling helpful to the rhythm and indicative of the swelling heart.

The necessary mouth position on "love" is less open than that of "ah," but the mouth

corners need to be slightly drawn to obtain the pathetic, half tearful tone the mood demands. The lips will then assume almost the "o" position.

The third note ("ed" in "belovèd") should be steadily but softly sustained to impart a dreamy tone.

The vowel "e" in "ed" should be pronounced as in "head" (one too often hears "id"). The mouth position is equivalent to nearly a half yawn, with just the slightest extension at the mouth corners.

On the next note ("sleep") a softer tone is required, with a lesser crescendo or breath throb. It constitutes a modified form of the preceding effect on "love," but the end of this note should be held *p.*, with a steady, equal flow to attain the dreamy, restful effect. It should be noted that this impression can only be conveyed by a moderately soft, unfaltering note of precisely the same power throughout. Any movement of the lips or alteration of breath pressure will introduce an element of quality disturbing to the mood, therefore should be guarded against. (See *Vocalism*, pp. 63, 64, and 82.)

The next note is on the vowel "i" and the word "thy." If any difficulty arise in obtaining the true pronunciation, let the pupil give

the sound of "ah," which must have for its final the long sound of "e." We then arrive at the perfect "i." The plan has this advantage. The singer is seldom able to satisfy himself over this vowel, because he cannot ascertain with convincing certainty the real mouth position it requires. It simplifies matters much to treat "i" as a combination of "ah" and "e," but the "e" must be very brief and treated as a final. It will thus be seen that two mouth positions are necessary to complete the "i": firstly, the "ah" position, which is one of the best for tone foundations; secondly, the slightly extended lips, as in "e."

Now as to phrasing. This note is sung with about the same power as "sleep." It must flow into the first of the next two notes that occur on the word "tears." The first note of "tears" is accented, and to obtain the requisite mood, which is suggestive of sorrow, I employ the check-breath attack as follows:

To acquire the consonant "t" it is necessary to press the tip of the tongue firmly to the gums over the top teeth. In releasing the tongue, a quick pressure should be made before separation comes (widely extended lips will be necessary here for "t," and the mouth should preserve the same position so long as the "e" is sustained). The tongue should be

released on "t" with the check-breath, but the "e" must be held steadily. The necessary diminuendo to give the subsiding effect will be obtained on "rs."

The "r" is accomplished by one turn or sweep of the tongue's tip over the roof of the mouth. This brush of the tongue is somewhat difficult at first to accomplish. The "r" must not be rolled. Practice, however, will soon give a simple but convincing turn to the "r."

The hiss of the "s" should be very soft and brief. The desirable accomplishment in connection with this word is to preserve immovable mouth position on the "e" sound. The tone should bear the real "e"—neither too reedy nor disguised.

The best result will be obtained by modifying the flow of breath so as to give softness to the vowel. Where too much breath pressure is exerted, vibration results in unpleasant reediness; hence, I say, less breath on such acute vowels as "e."

Now, this accent on "tears" must be but delicate, for it is the preparation for a crescendo.

Two notes occur on the next syllable ("for"), and the accent on the first should be almost imperceptible, for these notes must describe a gradual crescendo, the climax being

reached by a strong accent on the next syllable, "get" (in "forget"), which acquires a certain spasmodic impulse by the nature of the attack, which is heightened through the contrast of the sustained flow of the rest of the note, and which, however, tapers at the end.

By this treatment we introduce a cheering element of brightness.

The words I have referred to comprise one line. The breath is taken after "sleep" and "forget."

Then follow the words:

"The day is done, the sun is set."

Here another change of mood occurs. The word "the," of course, is on an unaccented note, therefore it is sung quietly and dreamily. Throughout this line, whilst the legato flow is generally preserved, certain notes are accented. But this must be done so as not to interfere with the flowing and somewhat colourless movement descriptive of the quiet rest which is supposed to attend the setting of the sun. The accents serve not only rhythmic purposes, but suggest a flickering of the expiring light.

The word "the," though soft, must be given a firm note. Many singers have some difficulty in acquiring the proper pronunciation of "e"

in the present case. Strictly speaking, this "e" should take the short sound of "u," as in "but." With certain voices I have had difficulty in arriving at sufficiently restful tone. On this vowel sound, therefore, I have advised a singer for resonant purposes to attack it with the open sound of "a," as in "father." If this is sung tranquilly it gives the approximate sound of the short "u," but adds a most delightful tone to the word.

Of course, the mouth will then assume the open "ah" position, but care should be taken that the corners of the mouth are not too extended. This can be guarded against by that indolent but full yawn which appears to drag the lips reluctantly apart and leaves the mouth corners unstretched. When the mouth position is assumed in that way all the muscles of the face are completely at rest, and there is no tension of the jaw or throat. To sing the vowel loudly in this way would have a bad effect, therefore it must be taken softly. Another reason for so doing is that the next note bears the principal accent of the bar.

It is on the word "day." The consonant "d" herein is secured similarly to the letter "t," only that as "d" has a harder sound than "t," the pressure of the tongue on the gums I have referred to must be heavier. Use

My Plan of Teaching

the same form of attack (check-breath), and secure a similar effect as in "get," only let it be slightly more delicate. The mouth position on "day" is acquired by a half yawn, with just the slightest extension of the lips. I am particular that the final of "a," viz., "e," should be suggested.

The next word is "is." The short sound of the "i" in this case demands nearly the same mouth position as the preceding "a" in "day." The same attention to the shortness of "s" should be paid as in the case of "s" in "tears." The note bearing the word "is" should be soft and sustained, and subservient to the preceding and following notes.

The following word is "done." This note receives the check-breath attack, but only in the slightest degree, so as not to disturb the legato flow of the phrase. The vowel position in this case is very similar to that of "ah," except that the singer must feel in a very serious mood, and get a more compact, impressive tone. This may be managed by considerably drawing in the mouth corners as one would do in treating a tearful note. On the consonant "n" the mouth closes rather quickly, but firmly, and the top corners of the upper lip are so stretched and elevated as to create rings in the mouth corners. This ex-

pedient results in enlarging the resonant space of the mouth, preserving a better outlet at the lips. It will be noticed this will cause the consonant "n" to become the bearer of tone. The sound will then go out in ring or wave vibrations. This helps to preserve the continuity of tone movement.

The following word is "the," and, as it is unaccented, is sung quietly, but with unchangeable power.

The next note is on "sun," and, although on the accented beat, requires no strenuous attack. The power should be intensified by a gradual minor crescendo, which is amplified through the note bearing the word "has" up to the next having the word "set."

The latter note ("set") will under these circumstances, of course, have derived fairly full power, and after a momentary hold at this tension a slow diminuendo will do all that is requisite towards illustrating the idea of the setting sun. (Of course, these notes can be differently treated to represent the same idea, but I have chosen this form for variety's sake.) The mouth position is the same as for "done."

It will now be seen that I have spent considerable time and space in dealing with but a few bars. This is my customary procedure in teaching. It is no uncommon thing for me

to spend from an hour to an hour and a half over a few bars. In the end I have found the plan most expeditious. It enables one not only to fix the mood, but to secure the various tone productions required throughout a song. By spending that time one is able to build the voice, as it were, on a proper pronunciation, to arrange the phrasing, and to overcome most of the difficulties which will occur throughout a study of the number, all at the same time. Various vowels, consonants, and moods occur in the opening of the song, which are repeated again and again in the following lines or verses. With all these difficulties overcome at the outset, little more than a brief reminder is necessary to put the pupil on the right track. This plan teaches the singer to apply the earlier examples in other and rather varied cases. It prompts the students to analyse, to think, and helps to make them something more than mere automata.

I will now proceed with the rest of the verse, when it will be noticed the explanatory work becomes briefer, because of that already accomplished.

The next line is as follows:

“Lie still, nor sigh, nor weep, beloved.”

The emotion herein is soothing; therefore

the legato flow must be more delicately studied than in preceding examples. I will take the words "Lie still." "Lie" is sung smoothly. (The office of the tongue on the consonant "l" is dealt with in *Vocalism*, p. 47.)

The vowel (long "i") I have already touched.

The short sound of the "i" in "still" presents difficulties to many singers. I have found that by giving initially to this "i" the faint sound of almost "e," when followed by the "l," the combinations in the word result in a most beautiful liquid quality of extreme delicacy. (As a rule, when a vocalist aims at the "e" sound it approximates to the short "i.") Here care should be exercised to preserve the vowel sound almost throughout the note, allowing just a moment for the bell-like effect of the "l." The notes on the first three of these words (viz., "lie") are sung with the same soft power, which, however, expands by a crisp attack on the vowel sound of the next word, "still." But this note diminishes immediately after the attack.

Then come the words,

"Nor sigh, nor weep, belovèd."

"Nor" is sung softly, like the preceding unaccented notes. "Sigh" is accentuated by the slightest pressure of breath, the tone

subsiding rapidly, illustrative of the sigh. On "weep" there is a slight percussion attack. "Be" is sung smoothly and delicately, preparatory to the crescendo, which expands on "lovèd." On the last syllable full power is reached, which diminishes gradually until it becomes momentarily sustained at the end, but still very softly.

The next words:

"Sink to rest, be—"

again demand the restful, dreamy mood. The word "but" is often a stumbling block in this case. If the vowel is taken with more extended mouth corners, the character of the tone will generally be found much improved.

The next note on "sink" can appropriately be sung rather full, the power subsiding slowly to a steady even pressure, suggestive of repose.

The note on the syllable "love" should be well rounded, rich, and full, to avoid any coldness of tone so chilling and inappropriate to the sentiment of the word.

On the final note, "sleep," a slight crescendo and diminuendo can be sung, but the general impression should be of a subdued soft note, which is not a mere skeleton, but possesses quiet intensity. The end of the note tapers, or rather dies away in "sleep." The opening of the next verse is similar to that of

the first, except that it is always wise in a second verse to pick up the theme with more promptitude, slowly increase the speed for a bar or two, when the slower tempo may be resumed with contrasting effect.

The opening words of the second verse are:

“Belovèd, sleep, for God is good.”

Here we have a repetition of the first line, so far as the musical phrase is concerned. For the sake of variety, it is as well to assume slightly more power than in the first instance, and less colour treatment. This is essential in the opening of the second verse, because upon “God is good” we desire to bring the thought into earnest prominence.

The singer should feel and look impressed with solemnity and the faith one feels in God’s goodness. Here the voice should suggest hope in buoyant tone (illustrated by slightly increased tempo and power, reaching the climax on “good”) and veneration, evinced in the dignity and solemnity of voice and manner.

The latter will demand full mouth position, with drawn corners, suggestive of pathetic, almost tearful tone.

If the smiling lip be employed on the word “is,” it will add a touch of evanescent

brilliancy of voice, illustrative of what is sometimes called "the tearful smile."

The object of an artist should always be to illustrate the emotions of the words in all their changeful impressions. To do this one has to employ very opposite effects, almost simultaneously, to give the idea of conflict of thought which often possesses the active mind. Then, too, such contrasts afford valuable variety.

Here follow:

"Thy griefs by Him are understood."

"Griefs" requires a crescendo breath, and "un" (first of the bar) a lesser pulse; "stood," a firm accent, as of conviction.

The line as a whole is sung legato, with the flow of even pressure.

The pulse on "grief" should illustrate the sigh of pain. As to the technique, mind that the "f" in "griefs" is enunciated clearly. (The upper teeth must touch the outside of the bottom lip to effect this.)

Hold the short sound of the "i" in "Him" throughout the note with an increased pressure of breath. This will not only assist the phrasing, but aid the facile aspiration of the "H."

The "oo" in "stood" is often either too cramped by the mouth or rendered heady by too much breath and too little opening.

Tongue the "t," as previously described, and make the mouth circle as large as is consistent with perfect pronunciation. Often a slight extension of the corners with difficult pupils will meet the emergency. Remember, hardly two people can be treated alike; thus, slight modifications must often be effected.

We next approach the words:

"So 'neath His wings in silence creep,
belovèd."

We meet the long "o" for the first time. Let the mouth be "o" shaped, and insist on real pronunciation of "o." As this is but a moderately loud unaccented note, the breath should flow steadily to acquire a restful effect. A slight crescendo occurs on "'neath."

Employ the smiling lips, as the thought is a pleasant one.

"His," this time, is soft, but partakes of the same cordial mood, and must be delivered tenderly and sympathetically.

The tone on "wings" should expand by a swift crescendo, both for effect and to suggest the boundlessness of that protection.

"In silence creep"—"in," rather softer; "silence," very soft and restful (as silence is), acquired by steady monotonous flow, through even breath and fixed mouth position. Nearly the same position on both syllables, the latter

more extended. Care should be observed that "lence" is not pronounced "lunce," but "en," as in "enter."

"Creep" should be treated slightly crescendo, so as not to disturb the insinuating movement.

"Belovèd" follows.

"Be" is sung softly, and on "love" the tone expands, by breath pressure, to enthusiasm, whereupon "ed" is attacked at the same full power by means of the check-breath. This gives a full-throated, bird-like burst, admirable as a climax of the mood.

"The day is done; belovèd, sleep."

Emphasise "day." Sing "is" placidly. Attack "done" firmly, sustain the tone evenly. "Be," very softly. "Love," softly at first, then a gradual crescendo, which does not become loud. Diminish on "ed." Give a firm note on "sleep," and slight extra pressure or throb.

"Lie still, lie still, nor sigh, nor weep."

The words "Lie still, lie still," demand an earnest but smooth, persuasive tone, accelerated to suggest growing eagerness.

Do not take breath after the comma following the first "sleep." It would disturb the soothing flow, and interrupt the breath current, which almost invariably alters the mood and quality of tone.

Crescendo, commence on "nor," reaching fullest power on "sigh," which should diminish in power somewhat, suggestive of a sigh.

The repeated "nor": commence the crescendo in order that "weep" may burst with an accent and be immediately softened by a diminuendo.

The closing line reads:

"The day is done; beloved, sleep."

This phrase should commence legato, very placidly, and the tone slowly expand, in dignified movement, until "done" is delivered and sustained forte (with solemn, impressive dignity). For a moment then the power (with tempo slightly accelerated) should diminish to a soft "be."

"Love" is now held *ad lib.*, and describes a modified crescendo and diminuendo, terminating with the the word "sleep," which dies away, on a prolonged hold, in a sigh.

By the methods I have suggested there will be no need to trouble about "placing" the voice. Accurate pronunciation acquired through adequate facial influences will not only effect all that automatically, but call into employment the requisite breath influences for sensitising the varied emotional tones.

Attention to consonants will facilitate tone

movement and economic breath management.

Everything hinges upon the completeness with which the singer feels and looks the sentiment she desires to convey.

TONE COLOURS

THERE is a wide difference between some cultivated singing and the vocalism which thrills or moves. Whilst the former may be pleasing, it does not often create deep emotion. The vocalism that thrills is the work of one capable of making his hearers feel all that the words and music are intended to convey.

One of the most vital elements of soulful expression is tone colour. By this term I do not mean to imply mere contrasts of extreme lights and shades. Bald effects in black and white hardly come under the category of colour. By "tone colour" I mean those changeful tints which illustrate the conditions the words and music suggest—those impressions which cause the audience to hear with their ears and see with the mind's eye, until they become so moved by the spirit of the situation that the harmonic and melodic currents become absorbed in the general atmosphere of the living tone picture.

Vocal colours, like those of the graphic artist, are composed of many elements. It is the tasteful employment of these effective

materials which results in picturesque achievements. Resourcefulness of expedient, when the technique is mastered, is of the highest importance. It can only be attained through the constant activity of a mind cultivated by the expansion of human sympathy. One must learn to feel for others—to become imaginative—to reflect with accuracy and swiftness of a mirror all that comes within his radius. The singer should not be content with a hazy impression, but should analyse what he sees and feels. An intelligent conception may then be his. Do not be satisfied merely with a central idea, but search, follow out, and understand all that impinges on the principal factor.

Every detail of vocal technique in some form contributes an element of vocal colour. They need not be specified; many will be cited at the proper time.

It is even more difficult to analyse with the pen tone colour than “style,” but I will endeavour, nevertheless, to give some idea of the manner in which technique may be employed in the preparation of tone colour.

As a first example, I will take three words from Guy d’Hardelot’s *Three Green Bonnets*. They refer to the distinctive eyes of three children, and occur as follows:

“One pair of BLUE eyes
And one pair of GREY;
And one pair of BROWN eyes,
For that’s Dorothy May.”

In treating the first (“blue eyes”), we should strive to impart to the tone the characteristics of the colour impressions. The singer ought to picture in his mind two laughing blue eyes, with the merriment and innocent openness of childhood, and should attempt to give appropriate expression to her own face—in fact, reflect the mood. This will place the mouth and other features in the accurate positions for producing the merry laughing sound. The movement of the notes on “One pair of blue eyes” admirably adapts itself to the necessary buoyant flow. The wayward tendency of the unequal rhythm heightens the suggestion. Naturally, as on most ascending passages, the time and power must be lightly increased to suggest facility and eagerness of movement indicative of buoyancy.

Here the influence of the breath is a factor in tone colour.

The word “one” should be delivered with a swift crescendo breath.

A breach of a very wise rule may even be permitted, viz., enlarging the circle of the lips with the flow of breath.

The lips at first should form a small round circle, which, as it becomes gradually enlarged in proportion to the increasing flow of breath, gives a touch of mystery to the tone as well as a certain progressive, rich fulness suggestive of the wondering eye. These expedients give what I may term full body colour to the tone, contrasting with the brighter tints which are to follow.

This contrast is valuable as tending to throw up the essential colour which completes the scheme. The student will realise that such treatment is vital to tone painting.

The clever artist will always so dispose his body colour as to accentuate the brilliancy of his higher lights.

Having dealt with "one" in the manner suggested, the next word, "pair," is sung with loose, comfortable, or restful lips, naturally opened, without extension. The vowel sound is that of the short "a," as in "hat." This should be retained throughout most of the note, whilst the "r" is acquired by a gentle extension of the lips, opened by the elevation of the top lip corners. This adds a certain dreaminess that precedes the more animated expression of the merry blue eye. The "of" should be somewhat demure, but acquire a touch of the full wondering expression. That

is achieved by a round, small mouth, with the corners well drawn in, as in the pathetic tone; this "o" approximating to the "awe" sound of long "a." Then follow the word and note on which the blue colour bursts forth unmistakably. It should be a "bursting" note. To obtain the effect with perfection, the lips must be firmly closed on the "b," the tip of the tongue just lightly pressed and instantly made to leave the upper gums in order that the "b" and "l" impressions may be so light and quick as to acquire the perfect blend of the two consonants, without showing any division. The real blue colour comes from the "oo." It will not acquire the azure tint if the "oo" position of the lips (usually a small circle) is too cramped. This shape should be widened by slightly extended lips. The dancing effect of blue eyes may be obtained by a somewhat tremulant attack, though the percussion should be firm, and the breath pressure immediately increased on the note to acquire the steadiness of restful colour. The word "eyes" may be treated with very slight and gradual diminuendo, but the mouth requires to be altogether more loose, and widely rounded. The approximate position of "i" will be similar to that of "ah," but this sound must be followed by the long "e," which

completes the "i," and it may be held rather longer than usual if the tone of the "e" is sung softly and decreasingly, so as to taper into silence.

"Grey" is a difficult tint to treat vocally; therefore in the line referring to "grey eyes," quite different technique will be necessary, and "one pair of" (in the "grey" line) must be sung monotonously, with a steady matter-of-fact legato flow, and at rather softer power than the corresponding words of the first line. The idea is to prepare the way for the cold grey, unemotional eye. The singer should picture thus a grey eye in his mind. It must be calm, with a blend of severity and indifference for its expression. The tone on "grey" should prove somewhat harder than that of the preceding notes. The power should be inflexibly steady and unemotional. Throughout this phrase but one pressure of breath can be exercised, and that even and pulseless. The note of "grey" should not be tapered. The final of "a," which is "e," may be sung briefly and with nearly the same power, but merely touched, not held. The position of the mouth on the vowel sound of "grey" should be described by lips reluctant to open, the aperture slightly contracted at the mouth corners. In fact, it will only be necessary to open the

lips as little as possible, consistent with sufficient parting of the teeth to escape any undue reediness.

The colour in "brown eyes" is attained by still another method. The preceding words, "and one pair," should be sung with a mysterious quality, and with a very slight and gradual crescendo, never reaching much power until the main sound of "ow" is reached in "brown." The flow must be very smooth legato. The "b" in "brown" is dealt with quite differently to the usual crisp attack. This "b" and "r" should be slowly blended by a certain "mouthing" action of the lips, as though the latter were loath to part. The mouth opens on this "o" sound slowly, proportionately to the increase of the crescendo breath, which here becomes necessary. The "br" should drag into "ow," and finally the main sound of the word is given with the roundest of mouths, and the lips and teeth close (with final "oo" impression) slowly on the consonant "n," so as to prolong the sensation of the consonant. This may be done by gradually stretching the mouth corners and elevating the ends of the top lip. Considerable power will be required on the "ow," and it should remain steady by a fixed mouth position at least, and an increasing flow of breath

sufficient to guard against any diminution of power.

The effect upon the audience will be: they will picture immediately the large, serious brown eyes of some child of their acquaintance and this impression of those brown eyes should possess the mind of the singer.

As to the facial expression, let the eyes of the singer be opened wider and wider with a wondering air, until a calm, full, but restful gaze is reached.

From this analysis it will be gathered that the breath, lips, the expression of the face, pronunciation and enunciation, state of the singer's mind, all combine in the acquisition of tone colour.

The first verse of *Three Green Bonnets* should be made bright as possible as a contrast to the others, which become more and more pathetic. The colour scheme must be changeful, though generally buoyant.

The opening demands special treatment, because the moods (therefore the vocal colours) are unusual.

"Three green bonnets at church one day."

This, the first line, represents the opening of the story, and should be somewhat matter-of-fact, but bright, as the first thought of those juvenile bonnets is pleasantly associated with

the healthy life of the fresh young children in their innocent demureness. The tone colours should represent a blend of frankness, contentment, and one tinge of pathos. A radiant accent or bursting note will give the buoyancy and happiness of youth on "Three."

"Green" may be sung more subdued, to suggest quaintness. On both the extended position will be needed—the first, laughing; second, smiling.

"Bon" (in "bonnets") should have the round position of the lips, with drawn corners, to give mystery and rather sad thoughtfulness to the impression, foreshadowing the sorrowful termination of the story.

A crescendo is necessary on "bon."

"Nets" (in "bonnets") must have the smiling position, as the sorrowful note represents but a momentary thought, dispelled by the next line.

The "o" in "bonnets" acquires almost the "awe" sound.

This treatment of the line will realise the conflict of thought in the mind of the narrator, at the same time prevent monotony of tone colour.

"At church one day."

Sing "u" in "church" almost with the "ah" position, and feel the tone in the centre of the

hollow of the mouth's roof. Hold the vowel throughout the note steadily, closing the mouth and stretching the lips in one action to produce the "r," which is completed by a brush of the tongue over the top gums. There is just an infinitesimal pause after the brush before delivering the hard "ch." The tongue tip lies lightly on the upper gums, whilst the "ch" impression is executed by the staccato breath.

These last words are sung legato, with a crescendo push of the breath on "chur."

"One" demands light but dreamy tone, with the slightest throb.

"Day" has a crisp, clean accent, heightened by lip pressure on "d."

"Dulcie and Daisy and Dorothy May."

In this phrase the dotted and short notes need to be strictly observed in order to present the dancing rhythm associated with volatile childhood. This will assist the portraiture of the little maids around whom, at this stage, it is necessary to create an atmosphere of youthful spirits. Merriment, therefore, should permeate these notes.

In attacking the first syllable, "dul" (in "Dulcie"), the "u," immediately after the crisp tongue of the "d," should quickly assume almost the "ah" mouth position, and

for the "l" the lips be swiftly extended to the laughing position for the bell-like vibration, which may be held longer than usual. The hissing of "c" (in "cie") must be brief and delicate.

A swift crescendo breath (see *Vocalism*, page 36) will be necessary for "dul."

"And" is sung softly legato. Do not attempt to enunciate the "d" in "and," because the note must flow into "dai," which is accented by a swift crescendo breath. To enunciate the two "d's" in succession would create a rough break in the continuity of the melodic phrase. A certain distinct, precise impression, tantamount to staccato delivery, must be realised; but in reality the passage can be faithfully sung with, and must have throughout, an uninterrupted, steady flow of breath. The accents may be thoroughly acquired with occasional increase of breath pressure (swift crescendo) on the accented notes. This method does not interrupt the continuity of breath current.

I may here point out that no singer can ever hope to paint songs in convincing tone colours until able to give occasional staccato effects with an immovable mouth and continuous flow of breath. To some readers this may appear an impossible task. It

is not so. Any singer may prove it by this experiment:

Take a deep breath, completely expanding the lungs. Open the mouth to the full "ah" position. Then sing one long-sustained note with even pressure of breath. Whilst doing this, touch the roof of the mouth with the tongue-tip, many times in rapid succession, until the tongue wags flexibly and independently, describing a quick series of "la-la-la's." Meanwhile, keep the mouth fixed in the "ah" position, the breath steadily flowing, and the tone will remain sustained whilst the independent, flexible tongue secures staccato effects.

Even strongly-accented notes may be delivered in a smooth phrase by adopting slight increase of breath pressure on the emphasised notes. The advantage of such accent is: the quality of the notes is not weakened or changed as it must be whenever a certain flow of breath is (even momentarily) completely stopped.

But to continue. We have now come to the attack of "Daisy." This requires a neat, crisp note (of check-breath order), not too loud, but immediately reduced by a brief diminuendo. It may easily be effected with a slight crescendo pulse alone, but the tone must subside gracefully to the "sy" in

"Daisy," and the melody continue its flowing course on "and" to "Dorothy," when a swift breath pressure or accent occurs on the first syllable of the latter name, "Do" (in "Dorothy"). As the colour of the "o" sound needs to be brighter in this case than usual, the mouth must not be too condensed—that is, the circle of the "o" should be more extended and the lips allowed to preserve a softer flexibility. This gives a reposeful condition of the mouth and pleasant sympathy to the tone, consistent with cheerful thoughts of a charming child.

The "o" in "ro" approximates to the "ah" sound, which, when subdued, gives the best musical impression of the syllable.

"Thy" should also be sung lightly, with an extended, smiling mouth.

The accent on "May" ought to be of an explosive, enthusiastic nature.

Then occur the words:

"Three green bonnets that nod in a row." This exhilarating picture of bright childhood is taken *forte* and with a buoyant swing necessitating mainly a smiling position of the lips.

The accents occur on "three," "bon-," "nod," and "row"; the first of each bar, of course, receiving the greater breath pressure.

The mouth position on "bon" should be

more rounded; that of "row," a similar shape, but more as in pouting, to suggest the demureness of mock gravity. The whole of the phrase needs to be taken rather faster, to prepare the way for the next line, which moves somewhat slower, owing to the precise, half-humorous stress laid upon the description.

It runs as follows:

"Each bonnet tied with a green ribbon bow."

To attain the requisite colours demanded, the mood must be slightly changed. Each accented note of these two bars should receive what I have termed the breath pressure or pulse, the unaccented notes intervening being delivered smoothly and lightly, so as to complete the appropriate flow of the phrase. A quiet smile should take possession of the face throughout this line, but the last word must possess a half-serious, mysterious tone, acquired in the way I have previously suggested, viz., by gradually opening and mouthing the lips on the word "bow." A slight pause after, or a hold on the note, is effective.

Then we come to the colours of the eyes, which I have already analysed. Thus we conclude our consideration of the first verse.

The second verse opens with these lines:

"Three little heads at the close of day,
Dulcie, and Daisy, and Dorothy May;

Three little heads of clustering curls,
Three little beds, and three little girls."

The music in this verse is marked at the commencement *poco misterioso*. It seems to need a fair element of subdued brightness. Steady, even breath pressure and legato flow will give the tone colour required at the commencement. The music of the line, "Three little heads of clustering curls," I think, demands some buoyancy of tone.

"Clustering" should be given with a moderate crescendo and diminuendo; whilst the word "curls" demands well-sustained growing tone on the vowel "u," and special manipulation of the mouth on "rls." The mouth partly closes slowly on the "r," to give a lingering impression, and the "l" should complete the curl by means of the tongue, as slowly as possible, in order that the consonants may be delayed so as to suggest the clinging of the curls.

As the last line of the above "three" should be sung confidently, the right vocal colour may be obtained by singing it precisely, but with a subdued, low, earnest quality of voice.

The next lines are as follows:

"Brown eyes are sleeping and blue eyes
and grey,
But angels are peeping at Dorothy May."

The colours of the eyes need not be so clearly defined by the tone qualities in this verse, though the necessary pressures of breath and mouth and other conditions should be fairly but moderately observed.

The bar which contains the first half of the line is marked *crescendo*, which should be observed, because of the softer contrast which must come in the next. Yet on "ing" and "an," that follow the word "sleep," the quiet mood of slumber can be introduced with effect. To do this, however, the *crescendo* should not extend into the last two notes of the bar.

Then the word "grey," in "blue eyes and grey," must be sung with the unemotional, colourless monotony suggestive of the severer tone necessary to demonstrate the grey eye.

"But angels are," in the last line, should be sung softly and anxiously. A loose, slow flow of wind, in which the breath may almost be heard, should give the requisite tone of alarm required here.

The note on "peep," in "peeping," may appropriately bear a slight *crescendo* and *diminuendo*, which brings the next syllable, "ing," very softly.

The words "at Dorothy" should suggest anxiety, much in the same way as I have

suggested, but with a little more flow and force of tone, to convey the impression of profound, almost inexpressible concern; whilst the last note of this verse, on which is the word "May," should be sung with almost a passionate burst, suggestive of high, but suppressed, emotional tension.

Much that I have said can be applied to the illustrative treatment of the last verse, but the composer's directions are almost sufficiently explicit. The whole mood is of sorrowful turn, and demands reserve in all but the matter of time, which must ebb and flow.

The word "foot," which occurs in this verse, contains a difficult vowel on which to obtain satisfactory tone colour. It is neither open nor closed, but a poor compromise. If the aperture be too much closed, breathy sound results of the foggy nature; if too open, we have the vowel "o" in evidence. I have often surmounted the difficulty (but it depends on the pupil-subject) by developing the circle of the lips into an oval, well stretched perpendicularly, because this permits of more breath pressure and greater tone through the enlarged sound cavity of the mouth.

In some instances I have had to lessen the circle and advise less breath. But in any case

the real "oo" sound must be preserved with even breath—just enough to escape the foggy quality.

The check-breath attack, followed by a swift diminuendo, generally gives the best quality of note on "oo."

"Swollen" (last verse), if effectively treated, gives an excellent opportunity for the introduction of emotional tone colour. Herein the "o" must have the full round "o" position, and receive a strong crescendo breath, through a gradually opening mouth, whereupon the final of "o," viz., "oo," should be made to tell briefly, and thus complete the roundness of the expanded sound.

The "n" may be prolonged a little.

The "o" in "stolen" must be modified as compared with that of "swollen."

THE BREATH, AND TONE COLOUR

A LOOSE, soft, hesitating breath may convey the impression of fear, hesitancy, doubt, if the last note be allowed to evaporate by the diminuendo.

A soft but steady tone throughout suggests rest.

A similar employment of breath, with occasional slow crescendos, may indicate contentment.

If the crescendos be more pronounced and throbbing—affection.

This treatment, with swifter crescendos or explosives—passion.

The same form of breath management may convey various emotional colour impressions, according to the facial influences and force of breath employed. The former govern mouth positions expressive of various moods.

For example: Pouting or round lips, or drawn-in mouth corners, suggest the grave, pathetic colours. The extended, laughing or smiling mouth—the brighter tints.

The most expeditious and certain method of seizing the necessary mouth position for a

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required mood is to think of some word or phrase which suggests the emotion demanded. Possess yourself of this mood, look it, and the mouth will automatically assume the right positions, the breath naturally conform to heighten the impression, and you will have the exact realisation.

A swift, steady, equal breath conveys firmness, conviction.

The same with increasing power and tempo—buoyancy, hope, triumph, etc.

Strong, even breath, with occasional hard accents, acquired by swift crescendo pressure—indignation, defiance.

Light pressure of breath and quick movement in the portamento denote pleasantry.

Heavy pressure and slow movement—agony of sorrow, regret, etc.

Harsh, disagreeable tone colours are the results of excessive breath, as well as incorrect mouth positions.

NOTE.—Vocalists frequently spoil their tone, particularly on high notes, by these means. They should cultivate the lighter quality of voice, viz.: the baritone, that of the tenor; the contralto, that of the soprano. This refers, of course, to very high notes almost beyond their respective ranges.

PRONUNCIATION AND ENUNCIATION, AND TONE COLOUR

A SINGLE vowel, syllable, or word may contain more than one colour element. (See *Vocalism*, page 32. Read chapters on "Pronunciation," page 39, and "Enunciation," page 47).

The note of nearly every syllable or vowel should have in the main full body-colour. This is obtained by sustaining the principal element of the vowel sound throughout most of the note.

Example: The word "hear." The aspirate "h" should be given with light, the acute "e" with firm, even breath, and the "e" sustained throughout the note with immovable mouth until the final consonant "r" is realised by slightly closing and stretched lips, and one upward brush of the tongue. The word should not be pronounced "he-ur" in equal proportions. The "r" must be very brief and light.

In this word of one syllable we have more than one colour impression.

In "u" (as in "beauty") we have three colours: the high light of acute "e," the liquid

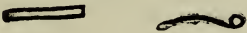
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tone acquired by the unison or blend of "e" and "oo," and the soft vignetting of the final or closing-lip influence of "oo," as in "moon." (See *Vocalism*, page 42.)

Study of the consonants will reveal many minor tints of value in illustrative composition, facilitating the acquisition of contrasts necessary to tone painting. These, by nature of their delicate gradations, exert important influence upon the harmonious blend of stronger vowel colours.


Unaccented words and notes fulfil a similar function. Their composition, therefore, should be carefully analysed, not to ascertain how much colour they may be made to bear, but how little. As a means of reconciling opposing factors, they become significant.


TROUBLESOME WORDS TO SING

“**H**ERE” (sustain) Final “r” very
 He - - - - - r brief, with one turn
  of the tongue and
 no movement of
 the lips. Make the tongue act inde-
 pendently of the mouth.



“**P**oor.” Press quickly the lips for “p” and
 instantly take the “oo” mouth position
 (●), retain it immovably throughout
 the note, and flick the tongue for “r” as
 a brief final. As the tongue turns, extend
 the lips to  position.

“**L**ike.” Press tip of tongue on upper gums,
 hold the breath, and suddenly explode on
 “la”; hold “la” throughout the note,
 saying “eek” as the briefest, but rather
 softer final.

“**T**rouble.” Trou-ble. Many singers have
  difficulty with “ble,”
 often pronouncing it
 “bul.” The best interpretation of this
 awkward syllable is acquired as follows:
 Sing “Trah” as the first syllable, at the
 conclusion of which quickly extend the
 mouth to the broadest smiling position,

thus: , uniting, swiftly, "b" and "l," softly humming the prolonged "l" through the mouth corners. Considerable pressure of breath is required to make the "l" sing; but care should be exercised to preserve a liquid quality of tone. To realise "l," I must again remind the reader, the tip of the tongue should be pressed against the gums of the upper teeth. With practice this consonant may be sung either with delicacy or power. The above position is for a bright mood. Nearly closed, rounded or pouting lips will give to "l" solemn or pathetic expression.

"WRINGING." In attempting to sing this word many vocalists are led by the "wr" to purse their lips and fall into a clumsy (because uncertain) attack, often singing a preliminary "oo." The vowel sounds of both "wring" and "ing" are precisely alike, viz., short "i" (as in "it"). In attacking each, aim at acute "e." As the back of the tongue goes up to the roof of the mouth for "ng," the acuteness of the "e" becomes so softened that the general impression of the pronunciation is perfect and the resonance of the note complete. The student should dismiss all

thought of the "w" in "wringing" (or his lips will wander after the useless consonant) and sing the word in the following manner: Open the mouth to square "e" position ; acquire the "r" by one flick or turn of the tongue tip and immediately sing acute "e." Proceed to "ng" by gently pressing the back part of the tongue up against the roof of the mouth as one does in talking, sustaining well the humming sound of "ng." Sing "ing" in the same manner, but with slightly less acuteness of the "e" representing short "i." By opening the teeth ever so little, from the square "e" position this is readily accomplished. Such opening realises the short "i" mouth position, thus: 



"SINGING." This word is sung in a similar manner to "wringing" as regards the vowel, but difficulty often arises from the "s." To realise this consonant neatly confine the hissing breath to the smallest possible point at the centre of the upper teeth. It is when the breath becomes scattered on "s" that it loses that concentration which realises neatness of attack. Reduce the aperture of the hissing breath column and the column

itself. Some people, in both speaking and singing, give the hard sound to the "g" (as in "gut"), saying "sing"—"ging." The "ng" can only be accurately delivered by the employment of the tongue as described under "wringing," and must always be prolonged by humming.

"THOU." In attempting this word do not aim to produce the complete sound of "ow" at the first attack. Remember, that "ow" as in "thou" is composed of "ah" as in "father" and "oo" as in "moon." The "ah" is held throughout the sustained word and the "oo" briefly sounded by way of final.

"LOVE." In attacking the vowel sound of this word let the mouth assume the "ah" position. Say "lah" so long as the vowel is sustained (but with less acute pronunciation), using a soft, loose breath. As the mouth closes to realise the "v," it adds sufficient of the short "u" sound (as in "love") to render the elements of the pronunciation proportionate, and the whole complete. This form is demanded when the mood is strenuous. Certain emotions require "love" to be sung softly, tenderly, or brightly. Then the

mouth should assume more of the smiling or extended position, when the "lah" sound may be less acute. But its influence must not be ignored in attack.

"TILL." This word presents difficulties to many, particularly on high notes, for the reason that they sing what "feels" to them a short "i," but it does not so reach the audience. Good notes cannot be sung without concentrating the tone more and more upon the vowel sound. Short "i," being short, is very difficult to consolidate and sustain. Perfect pronunciation and the true effect of the sustained vowel may be secured with ease and security as follows: Sing the letter "T" (tee) and preserve the sound of the acute "e" throughout most of the note, with the square "e" mouth position, thus: , terminating the word by holding the "l" with the extended mouth, thus: . Remember to press the tongue to the upper gums when attacking the "T," also in making the "l" hum. If the note on "till" is short, do not hold "l" as "ul," but secure it by a quick turn or flick of the tongue as on "r." Endeavour to preserve the "e" mouth position immovably, making the tongue

act independently on the final "l." By concentrating the voice on a vowel the note becomes compact, rounded, and clear, and is sung with ease, unless it be allowed, by weakening pressure, to disintegrate or scatter.

It is unnecessary to give further examples, as the student can adapt the above analytical plan of working.

PULSATIONS

THESE represent a succession of throbs either on consecutive or emphasised notes or bars appropriate to the rhythm. To impart effective pulsations to a legato passage is quite an art. To succeed, the singer should associate his mind with thoughts of a steadily flowing stream which widens or swells at regular points. Make the tone flow steadily, even over accented notes. Employ gentle but sudden throbs on the accent-notes, which should pulsate; but take care that no break in the continuity of the flow occurs as a consequence of the "push" or throb. The great difficulty in this pulsation consists of maintaining an even power and flow of voice; in other words, retaining the sustained, organ-like character.

THE THROB OR PULSE

BY this I mean the single elastic note which suddenly expands, conveying pathetic demonstration of pent-up emotion. Its nature differs from that of the more assertive explosive, because of its tenderer influences. The throb is accomplished by a very swift push of the breath. The note should be commenced with the softest of tone, that is instantly increased, to a greater or lesser extent, in accordance with the particular mood. The effect may almost approach that of the sledgehammer explosive, or, merely realise the rising and falling of a sigh according to the force of breath and suddenness of the crescendo. There is some little knack in acquiring the perfect proportions of the throb. The soft tone should not be held, but so covered by the increasing power as to cause the note to round itself into perfect globular form. The effect is then of a full, intense, but buoyant tone. It may have either the suggestion of severity, amiability, or timidity, according to the swiftness or force of the breath and concentration of the tone. The mood of the word

will suggest to the singer what he must feel, and his feelings will naturally govern the character of his technique, if he endeavour to look as he feels.

THE STACCATO ON A FLOWING BREATH

THE foregoing reminds me of another important point connected with the subject of pulsation. One of the worst features of modern styles of singing is the inveterate hammering of notes at full power by means of the explosive staccato attack. It reminds me of the querulous barking or "yapping" of an ill-natured dog. This execrable fashion (probably the reflex of declamatory opera) has caused many modern singers to acquire a most unsatisfactory method of dealing with staccato passages. The process is not only disastrous to tone security, but vocal quality and note movement. Anything which interrupts the natural continuous flow of breath induces unsteadiness, which, in turn, is fatal to pure vocal quality. Much of the modern staccato singing disturbs the breath current at every note, creating a scattered attack prejudicial to good tone.

It is possible to give due emphasis and fulness to accented notes and at the same

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time continue the steady flow of phrase. This may be accomplished, firstly, by sustaining a note at precisely the same power; next, whilst evenly, but rather softly, preserving this tone, execute the "throb" at the proper rhythmic points, on the notes which should bear the suggestion of staccato. Maintain the character of the legato flow, especially on the unaccented notes, as I have described under "Pulsations." By this plan, the breath currents remaining intact, a vocalist acquires the best possible tone and most facile progression.

“AH” THE ROOT OF SHORT “U”

CLOSING the mouth on “ah” brings short “u” in its most resonant form.

As soon as the “ah” sound is struck in attack, close the mouth slowly and, as the lips nearly meet, slightly extend them as in smiling.

It will be observed that the short “u” is completely realised by the nearly closed mouth. This position, however, is not favourable to the sustaining of short “u,” because, like all forces, it weakens the longer it is held. Thus it becomes necessary to aim at “ah” in attack in order to provide for the waste. By this plan the short “u” evolves by the most resonant process. Short vowels should generally be treated on these lines. Make it a rule to attack short “i” with a touch of acute “e.”

TONE TEXTURE

IN analysing tone qualities, for the purpose of acquiring the best interpretive timbre, I have often found it helpful to consider them as material textures—sometimes as metals. In the first-named instance one speaks of filmy tone—that soft or loose application of the breath and slight vocal concentration which acquires a gentle, dreamy quality of tone. (This timbre suggests affection or sweet amiability.) The other extreme represents the harder and closer fibre—dignity, anger, heroics. Then there is the medium quality which combines the metallic brilliancy with the softer texture, producing what may be termed the velvet tone (warm affection, amiable enthusiasm.) The technical processes which realise these effects may be understood by experimenting with breath pressures and facial indications of mood.

First of all, the singer should train the brain to think quickly and deeply. Rapidly alternating moods by way of relief are essential, and the sense of absolute proportion must ever be preserved

By feeling and looking what he sings, the vocalist surrounds himself with an atmosphere which so quickens his temperament that the voice immediately acquires tone texture illustrative of the appropriate mood.

Two agencies more especially influence the character of emotional colour—firstly, the mouth position, which comes of correct facial illustration; secondly, the more or less acute flow and concentration of breath which responds to the emotion suggested by the facial indications or mouth positions.

In practice it becomes necessary to remember every technical detail; in public performance it will be sufficient to recall the mood of the passage, whereupon the trained faculties involuntarily respond to the working of the more active and conscious technique. A single word flashing through the mind, such as "sorrowful," "joyous," "triumphant," "hesitating," "soothingly," "lovingly," "bravely," "passionately," "despairingly," should invoke the right temperament and prevent confusion of ideas.

TREATMENT OF RECITATIVES

NO finer practice offers itself than the study of recitatives. It not only serves to build the voice, but accustoms it to many phases of vocal colour and forms of expression. Too frequently recits. are treated with scant consideration, being regarded by many modern vocalists as mere preliminaries of little account. They are something more than this—they prepare the mind for that which is to follow and throw up into relief the significance of an aria through the power of contrast. Those who do not grasp the import of the recit. either shatter it by means of the violent explosive, or hastily slur the phrases with colourless flippancy. The outlines of such a subject should be as carefully drawn and filled in by dispositions of emotional colour as the more lyrical subject which follows. Indeed, no recit. interpretation is complete which does not, to some extent, combine, in sympathetic proportions, the lyrical flow with the dramatic incisiveness of declamation. The recit. should be made up of contrasts of style and mood, sometimes pronounced, often subtly suggested.

The more variety of treatment introduced, the less recits. become clumsy in stilted formality. These, being less symmetrical in form than lyrics, require more brains than the latter to interpret them satisfactorily. The changes of temperment connected with the former are far more sudden and perplexing.

The above considerations prompt me to offer a few suggestions upon recit. interpretation. As a subject for demonstration I will take "There were Shepherds," from the *Messiah*. Although it is not easy to explain with the pen the subtleties involved, the process, I trust, will cause singers to think and thus accustom them to habits and processes of reasoning. Unless they do this they cannot hope to become intelligent, therefore convincing, exponents. However beautiful the voice, singing can only move an audience to understanding and appreciation by the force of that sincerity which causes the hearer to realise just what the composer intended the character represented to feel. The emotional nature of the accompanying chords or phrases almost invariably provides a clue. These partake of certain lines of thought or suggestion which must be felt and analysed by the singer. At the same time the vocal artist should seek to give those ideas expression in such a way as

will employ the most effective contrasts obtainable from her technical equipment. In seeking to do this the singer must endeavour to treat her subject much in the same way as an artist would paint a picture. It assists a student very much, I have always noticed, to study on this plan.

Temperament can readily be influenced by likening vocal qualities to colour shades, atmospheric impressions, even geometrical forms of the draughtsman. Any illustration which causes the singer to realise the form, colour, or mood of the effect sought to be produced is helpful, because there is much efficacy in the association of tone elements with suggestive objects and ideas.

Tone derives its character and quality firstly, from concentration on the vowel sounds; secondly, its more delicate variations of timbre and expression through consonant suggestions.

Bearing this in mind, we will proceed to consider the phrase,

“THERE WERE SHEPHERDS.”

Attack the first two words (“There were”) precisely in the same form. They should have moderate power, sustained organ-like flow, and be free from explosive accent. No emotional paroxysm. The mood is dispassionate,

but grave, as though impressed with the responsibility of a weighty pronouncement. Somewhat reflective. On the word "There," adhere to the short "e" sound and realise the "r," not by the burr of a prolonged "r," but at the end of the note by means of the quick, light flick or single turn of the tongue tip. Pass quickly on to "she" in "shepherds," before the tongue has time to become unsettled in its last position. Keep the tongue still until it is required for the touch of the letter "d." To relieve the monotonous tones of "There were," commence a crescendo on the latter part of "were" so as to effect an accent on "shep". This should be a bright, brief crescendo or pulse accent with sufficient sparkle in the tone to pleasantly relieve the colourless character of the two preceding notes. Unless this treatment is bestowed on "shep" the voice will move so heavily as to create a stiff, wooden impression. On the first two words preserve a solemn expression of the face, but smile on both notes of "shepherds." This will cause a shaft of bright sunshine to relieve the gloom. Diminish the tone brightly, almost playfully, on "herds," holding the note long enough to suggest a delicate diminuendo. The singer will thus realise a touch of airy grace.

If the particular singer's voice is cast in the heavy, sombre mould, brighten slightly "There were" with the faint smile of the partially extended mouth, but not to such an extent as would rob "shepherds" of the more obvious sparkle.

In singing any recitative or aria, however solemn may be the mood, introduce these bright, high lights at intervals. Such expedients not only serve to secure variety of tone and expression, but throw up and enrich the shadows and facilitate vocal movement by causing the lips to become supple, the tongue active, and the breath more responsive.

If the voice of another singer should be thin and wiry, that person must lean towards the sombre methods of expression. No two persons can be trained precisely alike, but must be dealt with in accordance with their respective temperaments or prevailing tone qualities.

Supposing the soprano who is studying this recitative should have a particularly unemotional voice, so much so that the tone is inclined to "droop" or "sag," then it would be necessary for her to execute a crescendo "push" on "There were" and "shepherds" in order to preserve the pitch, resonance, and vital flow of the voice. In this case it may be

necessary to give slight pulsation to each note, but this should not be allowed to disturb the shading or the symmetrical flow. The correct pulsation adds buoyancy of note without suggesting crescendo form or undue accent.

A singer may not accurately hear her own effects, but can always FEEL THEM. In the case of the true pulse, the throat feels loose and open, whilst the vocalist realises that the chest pressure is the source of power—the fulcrum, so to speak. The concentration of the breath is suggestive of the sensation experienced in coughing. This delivery is really comfortable, practically effortless, and when rightly acquired imparts a proud and exhilarating consciousness of security.

It should be remembered that a vocalist is not expected in recitative work to adhere closely to the rhythm of the written notes, though it is necessary to preserve, as it were, the outline of the tempo. Were each note to be accorded its written value the result would be exceedingly stilted and mechanical. With regard to this freedom I would suggest that the first two vocal notes of the recitative should be longer and more sustained than is suggested by the “copy.” That upon which “shep” occurs (in “shepherds”) should be a brief note, and “herds” held rather longer

than the first two. "Shep," of course, is taken on the note above "herds," and not as written.

"ABIDING IN THE FIELDS."

The first syllable "a" should be somewhat brief, unemotional, and sung more in the humming form, aiming at the vowel "ah." Of course, the vowel sound in this case is short "u," as in "but." As this results in an unfavourable mouth position, because of its tendency to cause the lips to close, the result, as it reaches the audience, does not represent sufficient openness to convey the accurate impression. Therefore, I suggest the singer should aim for the "ah" position and sound, closing the mouth slowly to short "u" position immediately after attacking "ah." It must not be a blatant "ah," but slightly veiled. This note is but a preparation for the immediately occurring first of the bar, which demands an emphasis. The accent (on "bide"), however, may either be obtained through a very swift crescendo push or a delicate explosive, and it will be noticed that the vowel sound is that of long "i." As "i" consists of the diphthong "ah" and "e," the same mouth position serves and prevents that lip movement which changes the character of the tone,

often setting up a disturbing influence. The "ah" sound is held throughout the note, the "e" being the briefest final. The whole of this is sung legato, and as the concluding portion of the preceding phrase was somewhat bright, this one should have the more thoughtful or sombre tinge, saving the last note on "fields," which may be influenced by a smile that will add the necessary brighter relief by way of a high light. Just a touch of efficacious brilliancy of note may be imparted to the short sound of "i" in "ing" by the suggestion of acute "e" in attacking, as though it were "eeng." If the consonant "n" is properly observed the short "i" sound will follow in due course and preponderate. The acute "e" helps to concentrate the tone and clear the voice at the onset. Give the same length of note to "bide" as to "there" and "were." Sing "ing" lightly. Make a slight crescendo on "the," and a decisive declamatory but sustained note on "field." The general impression of the voice on this word will be full-toned, dramatic, and rather assertive. As the next phrase will partake mainly of the same emotional character, it is necessary to introduce what I have termed a high light of more amiability. This can be done in accordance with correct technique by

use of the smiling or extended mouth on "ld" (in "field"), so that the note melts amiably in soft, bell-like tone which ends with the crisp but delicate touch of tongue-tip-delivered "d."

"KEEPING WATCH."

Deliver the above words with declamatory emphasis, yet without isolation of the notes, the chief accent on "watch" being carefully realised. Whilst each note is made to preserve a confident ring, a legato under-current should flow. This effect may be achieved by legato delivery, if each note is attacked suddenly, then sustained, without any other stress than that secured by the swift crescendo breath pressure, which renders the note round and buoyant, without betraying explosive characteristics. The mood here should be thoughtful and dignified—suggestive of the consciousness of firm security. The acute "e" mouth position remains immovable on the sustained vowels, long "e" and short "i," if the "i" is attacked as "e." "A" in "watch" should be attacked as "a" in "awe," because the sombre, lonely mood here warrants the expedient. Make the note on "watch" rather staccato, but do so by the push-breath ending with full power. The crying or pouting

mouth may be preserved throughout the phrase.

“OVER THEIR FLOCKS.”

Commence “ov” rather softer and more amiably, with the transparent tone of a looser breath. Gently but steadily increase the tone on this syllable whilst still maintaining the same mood, to suggest the gradual overspreading of a protecting influence almost atmospheric in its softening influence. Continue the crescendo by very slow degrees, but attain a slight pulsation, by brief breath pressure amounting to crescendo and diminuendo, on each syllable, gradually reaching a climax of fervent tone on “flocks,” which has almost an explosive accent, followed by sustained flow.

“BY NIGHT.”

These concluding words are each attacked boldly and, after brief sustaining, end at full, buoyant power. Attack “by” as “bah,” sustaining that sound throughout the note, which is cut off by acute “e.” The same vowel rules in “night,” concluding with “eet,” briefly, and very delicately delivered. Let the spirit of this phrase be proudly confident, but the final “eet” of “night” must be angelically amiable—a mood acquired by a gentle smile

and bright, but evaporating note, that never loses its halo of soft light.

“O, WORSE THAN DEATH INDEED!”

The recit. which precedes “Angels, ever bright and fair” (from Handel’s *Theodora*) affords such excellent opportunities for analytical study and voice building exercise, I am impelled to offer some considerations.

Here, again, one must endeavour to appreciate the moods of the character before attempting to give expression to the text.

The recit. opens with the above words, suggesting the agony of despair. The singer should possess herself of this mind and facially depict that temperament; then it will not be difficult on the first note, “O,” for the horror-stricken, crying mouth to assume the position calculated to emit the characteristic “O” by what I term the check-breath delivery. (*Vocalism*, page 36.)

The accent on the ejaculation “O” should be less demonstrative, but more suggestive of pent-up agony, than on “worse,” which may partake rather freely of outspoken despair.

“Death” demands the most acute expression of impulsive horror, because it forms the climax of the sentence. Accordingly, “than” should be minimised.

"Indeed" requires meek but faint staccato delivery; the portamento on "deed" representing the evaporation of the recent paroxysm—a forced resignation which comes of failing strength.

From the above it will be seen that the phrase, "O, worse than death," is intended to represent one in a delirium of frantic despair and that the temperament of resignation sets in on the tone "in" ("indeed"). The accent (both of the delicate staccato order) is more pronounced on "deed" than "in."

And now as to the method of production:

Attack "O" by means of the swift crescendo (*Vocalism*, page 36), sustaining the tone for an instant on this note, then suddenly diminishing.

Take "worse" with the abruptness and fuller concentration of the explosive and retain the power, cutting off the tone at full strength.

"W" is a bad letter to enunciate on a loud attack, because so many singers "fog" the note by a false preliminary "oo," or narrowly rounded mouth, and the lips have not time to move to the vowel position. Sudden focussing of the tone under these conditions is impossible. The remedy in such cases is: Say the "w" with a more extended mouth opening.

Trouble over "w" in this instance, however, will not occur if the singer remember that "worse" should be attacked by the small, pouting aperture of the crying mouth (such as the lips take preparatory to whistling). This, however, only applies to the "w," because the lips open perpendicularly almost to "ah" position in height, but condensed at the sides, as in saying "awe," to reach the vowel opening, which is practically short "u."

"Than" is sung with slightly less accent than "death," and about the same pouting lip opening which the entire phrase demands.

The "d" in death should be quickly and neatly tongued to assist the clearness and concentration of this most emphatic attack.

Maintain the true sound of the vowel on all sustained notes.

"LEAD ME, YE GUARDS !

Resignation is the frame of mind here. Sing "Lead me" in legato form, but with a gently increasing pressure of breath, almost in a spirit of entreaty.

Sound the note of command by the more staccato and emphatic delivery of "ye guards," but without undue power.

"LEAD ME, OR TO THE RACK !"

"Lead me" should be stronger and more

buoyant—in the direction of earnest and impulsive reiteration. A pause after “me.”

“Or to” smoothly and softly, almost tearfully, with sustained emphasis on “to,” amounting to a hold. “The” quickly.

Sing “rack” with the push of swift excited breath, which rounds the note, shutting it off at full power. Let the delivery have the click of “rack.”

“I’LL THANK YOUR GRACIOUS MERCY.”

This is sung softly, meekly, hesitatingly, with the suggestion of a smile, indicating an angelic frame of mind. The smile will add the sweetness of transparency to the soft tone.

Connect “I’ll” with “thank” by means of the most delicate (almost indistinguishable) slur. End “thank” suddenly by a crisp “k” as if the breath were well-nigh spent; then sing “your” and “gra” smoothly with renewed breath, accenting each by the throb of identical crescendo pressures. Deliver “cious” softly legato, gently accenting each note of “mercy” alike, allowing the latter to fade sweetly in a spirit of childish trustfulness.

Stand immovably, smile faintly, looking upward, as though wrapt in some heavenly vision.

Above all, do not wear an air of self-consciousness—guilty or otherwise.

"OR TO THE FLAMES!"

"Or," short note. "To" and "the" longer notes than written and of equal length, identical attack and delivery. The tempo here is deliberate, the movement legato, but the notes must be struck promptly, without any apparent slurring, though smoothly connected. The mood is soft, resigned, and pathetically complaisant. Just a slight spasmodic attack on the first note of "flames," the second note evaporating by the light of a patient smile, suggesting the dawn of future hope.

All this may seem very theatrical, but no artist ever reached a high pinnacle without cultivating imagination. The training I have suggested affords the only means I know of attaining that rarest of gifts—call it feeling, soul, or what you will.

SUMMARY

IN reading the various chapters of this series (*Vocalism*, *Elocution*, and *Vocal Faults*), the professional and the student, I am aware, will be inclined to say, "Dear me! What a lot to remember!"

In reply, I would point out the folly of attempting too much in a given time. Sufficient for the day is the work that can be accomplished in the hours at the student's disposal. Do not strive to cross your bridge before you come to it; in other words, do not anticipate. Study the ground along your path and make haste slowly. Remember the following points:

- Before you sing a note, ascertain the meaning of the word you are to sing, and its emotional relationship to the text. Employ the tone colours in your voice, which will produce something more than the distinct articulation of that word.

- Before you can do this you must listen to other singers, and be able to distinguish every emotional variation in the singer's voice.] In these books you will find the respective

technical processes for producing the various vocal colours. Practise them until they come without thought as to the details of the process.

—Remember, that on the faithfulness of sustained vowels and the clearness and delicacy of consonants depend your best vocal quality. You cannot realise either without feeling and looking what you sing.

Do not allow your vowels to weaken in pronunciation. Make them more and more acute the longer you hold them.

Soften the tones of consonants—let them sing themselves by the sighing of the naturally expiring breath.

Do not think about your tongue—your mouth positions will regulate that member unconsciously in singing, as in speaking.

Do not trouble about how you shall breathe. Many so-called breath gymnastics I have found to be positively harmful to students. You should LEARN TO BREATHE WITHOUT KNOWING IT, by singing. Practising breathing without singing is useless to the vocalist. All you need ask yourself is: “Am I to sing softly or loudly? Is this sustained, crescendo, or diminuendo?” Then do simply what is required. If you have not taken in breath enough, or have wasted it on unaccented notes

or too sudden crescendos, you will take care it does not occur again.

-Do not hit under your notes: in vigorous passages attack them suddenly and squarely on the pitch. In soft phrases attack squarely, but with gentle contact. In either case increase the tone slightly after attacking the note.

If it become necessary to glide from one note to another, do not impart much tone to the slur.

See that the emphasised notes of the bar are "felt" or accented by means of the swift crescendo push or throb, or crisply touched by the staccato attack, as the case may demand.

-Do not allow the voice to wobble or become tremulous. If a tremor is indulged in, let it be by means of intermittent sounds squarely on the pitch.

A tremor is dangerous under any circumstances, and an ineffectual substitute for sustained, pathetic tone colour.

If you want pathos, use the tearful note—cry, or sing as though crying.

If you want brightness, smile. You cannot do this without sunshine coming into your voice.

Master the legato flow. Imitate the smoothness of the church organ.

Do not, when singing staccato notes, abandon the legato altogether, hammer your notes and break your breath current; but acquire the staccato effect by singing a very quick crescendo and diminuendo on the accented notes. You will then find that the legato current is suddenly expanded at the desired points and your tone much improved thereby. There should always be a steady under-current of tone in staccato work, cadenzas, rapid runs—yes, even in turns and other ornaments.

In singing runs find out which groups require an accent on the first note. The breath will then do the execution.

An accent may be necessary on another than the first note of a group. The rhythm of the phrase will suggest which.

—Do not strive for power; cultivate quality.

Never be tempted to sing anything you have not so thoroughly studied that you have realised all which can possibly be made of it.

—Never rely upon your own opinion of your work. You cannot perfectly hear yourself. Do not accept the public's estimate of your powers—they will lure you to dangerous paths. Know a trustworthy specialist and be guided by his or her judgment.

Do not estimate a vocal teacher's capa-

bilities by an isolated example—hear a number of his pupils and ascertain if they are all well-trained and artistic, irrespective of the quality of their voices. One swallow does not make a summer.

You must enjoy good health to sing well, therefore take plenty of fresh air and walking exercise. Drink little, smoke less, or—better still—not at all. If you must smoke, do not attempt it until an hour after you have sung your last note at night.

Your voice and your singing should be the first considerations.

Observe the injunctions set forth in this series and you may add twenty years to your effective artistic career.

A FINAL WARNING

IN applying the principles laid down in this book, the student should be careful, after once perfecting the results sought, not to overdo anything. The tendency even of the greatest singers, as time goes on, is to unconsciously exaggerate their most expressive effects, whether of a delicate or pronounced nature. They often underdo the former, overdo the latter. That which is well balanced at the time of fruition may eventually seem to them, through familiarity, less effective than heretofore; whereupon a gradual course of exaggeration sets in until the original effects pass beyond recognition. Then the artist is compelled to resort to his "coach" for the necessary readjustment. It is because a singer cannot perfectly judge his own voice and effects that he must periodically be "re-tuned" in order to correct faults which have really grown out of virtues, through exaggeration. Neglect of technique in quest of more "soul" is frequently the primary cause of this trouble. Be warned! Avoid, equally, carelessness and over-confidence.

Having once read these pages, do not put them permanently aside in the belief that you have learned all they can teach. [A little knowledge becomes dangerous unless constantly put to the best practical uses. Continue, therefore, to study and apply; for, as Schumann has said, "To learning there is no end."

THE END

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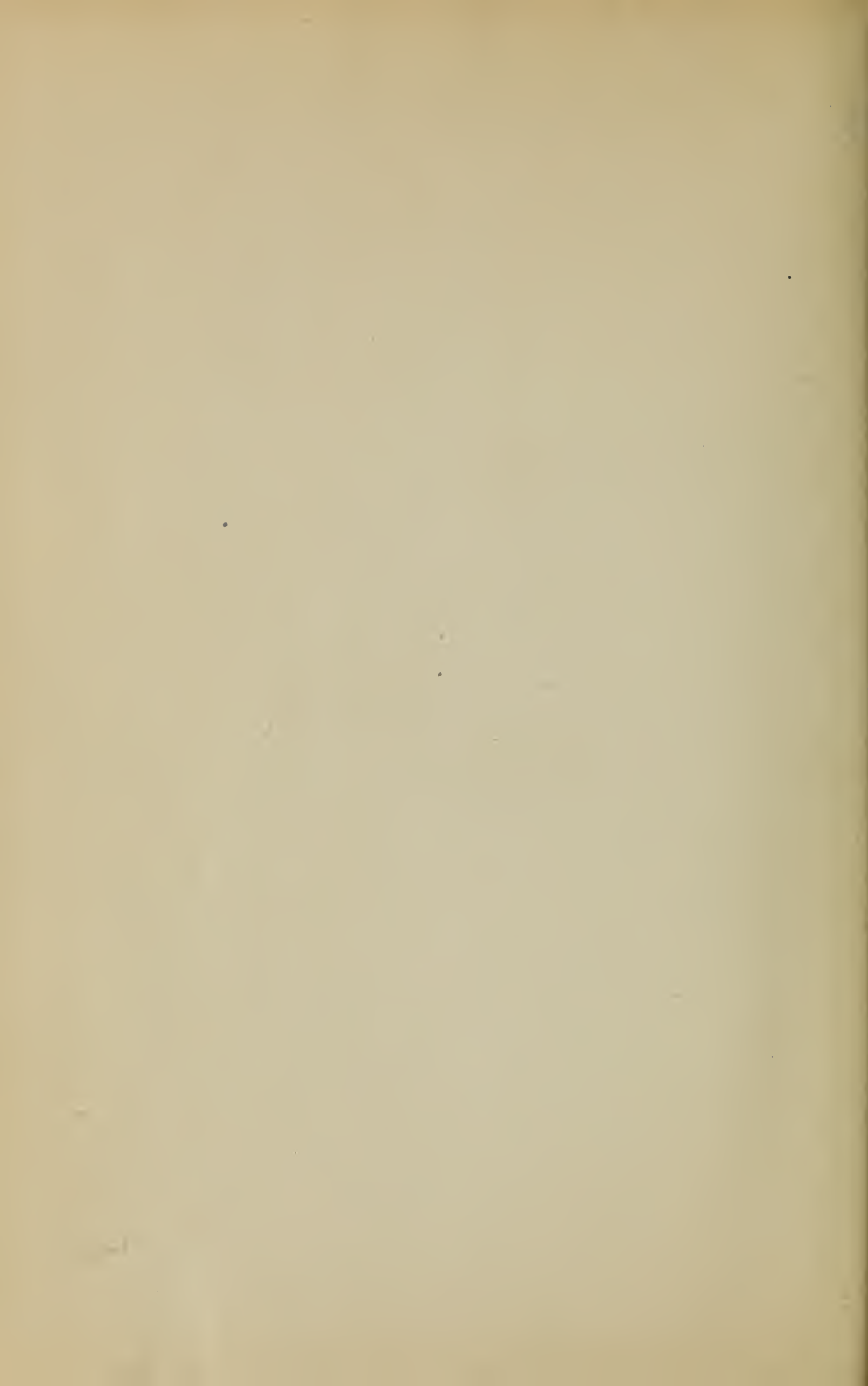
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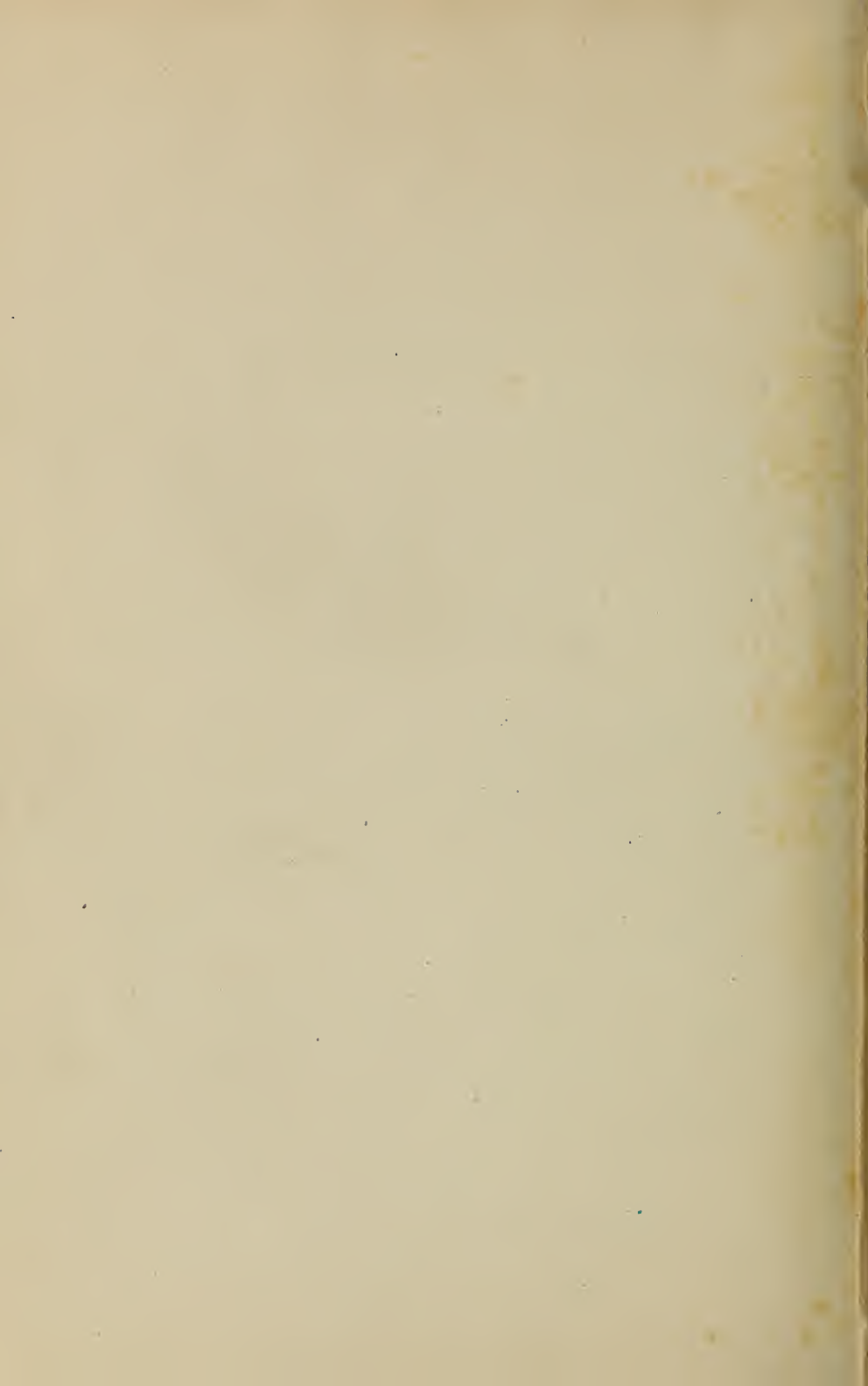
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SEP 2 1981	SEP 22 1991	SEP 22 1991
MAY 26 1984	OCT 10 1991	OCT 10 1991
JAN 8 1982	SEP 18 1991	SEP 18 1991
JAN 29 1982	AUG 2 1984	SEP 09 1991
FEB 12 1982	FEB 25 2004	FEB 25 2004
FEB 15 1982	JAN 22 1985	FEB 13 2004
APR 13 1982	FEB 6 1986	
MAY 3 1982	FEB 13 1986	
MAY 10 1982	FEB 27 1986	
SEP 1 1983	MAR 06 1986	
	APR 11 1986	
JAN 28 1984	DEC 10 1984	
APR 6 1984		

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